

COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL TO PRETEENS
VIA DAILY DEVOTIONS

A THESIS-PROJECT
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To my dear wife and companion in ministry

Ministry, at its best, is reaching the Child for Christ.

—Michael Kanu

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ABBREVIATIONS

MPS	Methodist Primary School
ZMES	Zion Ministries Elementary School
ZMESBA	Zion Ministries Elementary School, Bandawa
ZMESBO	Zion Ministries Elementary School, Bo

ABSTRACT

The decline of Christian schools' evangelistic passion in a secularized and Muslim-dominated society triggers a major concern. To regain its former impact, there is a need to have the school rooted and governed by the Great Commission, with the Word of God being prominent in every facet of its existence. Based on Biblical and theological perspectives on children's ministry, a review of relevant literature, and the background knowledge of the writer's early Muslim upbringing, this thesis-project will offer some strategies and recommendations for a transforming school ministry that could produce reproductive Christ-liked followers that could become channels for national revival.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Basis of My Topic

The writer could not think of any better and sure means the church could effectively fulfill its Christian mandate to the world without the children of today, the next generation, being a target.¹ Engaging these children in their places of interest, where they spend much of their time away from their individual homes, could serve as a very fruitful means of accomplishing the all-important mandate of the church—“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20).²

Being that it is the aspiration of every parent and the need for every child to gain education makes schools a place where children cluster irrespective of their different religious persuasions. The goal of the Government or public schools is to make the students worldly, “to make them conform to the moors of the society.”³ As the goal of these schools becomes increasingly secular and the consequent proliferation of deviant behavioral practices should urge churches and Christians to see the need to afford an enhancing environment that could help to guide the child towards conformity to the image of Christ. Apostle Paul writes, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2).

1. Robert J. Choun, *The Christian Handbook on Children's Ministry Reaching and Teaching the Next Generation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 1.

2. All Scripture references are taken from the *King James Version*, unless otherwise noted.

3. James W. Deuink and Carl D. Herbster, *Effective Christian School Management* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones Univ. Press, 1982), 11.

Having a Christian school could not only go to satisfy the quest for the general education that is sought after by all children and, more importantly, it also gives the opportunity of impressing Christian influence on young lives. The Lord's final instruction to His followers goes beyond just reaching out to get the lost saved. It does apply to the education and training of the local church by its own members. Dr. Robert E. Coleman notes, the ultimate goal and the priority of the church in fulfilling the Great Commission is to make disciples.⁴ It is therefore important to bear the full resource of the local church on the education and the training of its children as a strategic response to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. When emphasis on Christian education dwindles, it gives way to a whirlwind of secularism with devastating effects, abandoning much of the children and the youth to the secular culture. C. B. Eavey rightly notes, "So long as the church continued this practice of teaching the Bible it thrived, but when it neglected its teaching function it declined in spiritual life."⁵

It is a sad mistake to have this vital instrument of Christian Schools not to be employed for evangelism or not fully utilized to fulfill the Church's single purpose of being. The latter is the sad reality of the writer's context. The author comes from a Muslim background, who, by divine providence had the opportunity to attend Christian mission schools all though his primary and secondary education. Although Bible knowledge was part of the school curriculum, it was only taught for academic purpose. Christian devotional sessions were routinely observed without convincing influence upon its pupils and the institutions as a whole. The pupils were not purposefully challenged with the gospel message that could warrant faith-consideration or making a decision for Christ.

Apart from the formal routine of having Christian devotions, many Christian schools in

4. Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1998), 9.

5. C. B. Eavey, *History of Christian Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 189.

Sierra Leone remain indistinguishable from none-Christian school in terms of morals and values. It has now become obvious that Christian schools only bear the adjective “Christian” as a pretext. It is obvious; these Christian schools mainly exist to fulfill the singular goal of the secular school. It takes at least 6 years to get through elementary school. The educational system is currently divided into the following four stages: The first is six years of elementary education (Classes 1–6). The second is three years junior secondary School education (JSS 1–3); the third is three years of Senior Secondary School education (SSS 4–6) or three years of technical vocational institution training; and the fourth is a four-year university or other tertiary education. The years in primary school alone, if managed well are enough to cause incredible transformation in the life of a pupil, let alone the secondary school years are added.

The failure of the Christian school to unleash its potential to impact its pupils could be contrasted with the success the Early Christian missionaries to the country had in the use of Christian schools as part of their mission to reach the children of the nation.⁶ Christian missionaries took the lead in introducing impressive educational system to Sierra Leone regardless the limited financial resources they had. Apart from other Christian missions, the Church Missionary Society started missionary endeavor in the colony of Freetown about 1800, and gradually moved into the interior of the nation and later spread to some other West African nations. It was successful in establishing schools and other educational institutions. They envisioned that Sierra Leone should become the springboard for reaching other nations of Africa with the gospel. They followed the strategy of educating the free slaves and later the natives.⁷ They were able to produce teachers and missionaries, among others. These missionary

6. Joe A. D. Alie, *A New History of Sierra Leone* (Oxford: Macmillan, 1990), 76.

7. J. K. Agbeti, *West African Church History*, vol. 1, 1482–1919 (The Netherlands: Leiden E. J. Brill, 1986), 20.

institutions intentionally sought to produce Christians who had intellectual or technical ability and at the same time sought to mold the character of their pupils to become hardworking, honest and caring individuals.

Today, the reputation former missionary schools had, gives the assumption that present Christian mission schools and other private Christian schools that have emerged over the recent years do carry the same efficiency. The writer's experience and observations have proven otherwise. The output of Christian schools has been met with a gradual decline since the country's independence.⁸ Its Christian identity has precipitously diminished.

From the author's personal experience and observation, it is apparent that the diminishing potency of Christian schools to impact their pupils and community could be largely attributed to the failure of making the Word of God viably central in the Christian School. It seems obvious, Christian schools have lost the true sense of their existence and focus. This has rendered most of the Christian school schools largely secular. Thus, diminishing the interest and respect it has once commanded from well-meaning parents.

Nonetheless, Schools that are Christian indeed are of vital necessity. Contrary to popular opinion, the Christian school does serve the society in valuable ways. It does not only produce academically sound individuals, but it grows people that are spiritual and morally conscious. The Christian school gives its instruction in light of the Word of God.

Although the country has diverse religious groups, with Islam as the dominant, it is a secular country. Therefore, its educational curriculum is also secular. Nonetheless, each approved private or Christian school is granted the liberty to observe ten to fifteen minutes of corporate devotions and one day a 45-minute chapel service, in accordance with the school's

8. Adu Boahen, J. F. Ade Ajayi, and Michael Tidy, *Topics in West African History* (Essex, England: Longman Group Limited, 1986), 16.

religious persuasion. In this respect, each mission or Christian school has the opportunity of preparing and delivering its own devotional material it can utilize during the regular devotional sessions of the week. Besides, teachers have the liberty to offer prayers in their classes and sharing their personal convictions without imposition while teaching.

The author has the vision of the children becoming God's agents towards communal and national revival. This vision has led to the inception of a Primary school called the Zion Ministries Elementary School in 1996. Its current enrolment is 550 and with over 500 graduates. As a Christian school, it not only exists to satisfy the quest for the general education sought after by all children but most importantly, it is meant to give the opportunity of exerting Christian influence on young lives. This school stands to serve as a strategic means of fulfilling the Great Commission.

This School came into existence as an experimental response to the declining state of the Christian schools. It has the following mission statement: *It exists to provide the family with a Christ-centered, biblically directed education which challenges students to know the Lord Jesus Christ and to develop the vision and practice of excellence in academics, character, leadership, and service to others.* It has the overall purpose of providing a comprehensive education for its pupils through an academic program of study in a context of a Christian world view. It seeks to integrate both faith and academic rigor that offers salvation and encourages spiritual formation and growth that results in a Christian mind and godly character.

In order to establish this Christian goal, it is crucially important that such education be delivered by Christian teachers and staff, in a Christian moral environment, and at the same time able to give viable Christian instructions. Considering the vital role the proclamation of the gospel does in bringing salvation and Christian maturity in the Christian school, it is critically

needful to have the school maximize its evangelistic effort by developing a well-planned and organized gospel centered devotional lessons for a more viable ministry impact. It is equally important to have the Word of God permeate every facet of the school because there is the all-important need to seek and to save the lost including those from Islamic background.

The Purpose of Study

Looking for the most effective way of reaching out with the missionary mandate in the 21st century, targeting school children seems to be most strategic and fruitful. The Christian school provides a wider context and a good contact point for evangelism. The Christian school is used by the local church for learning, training and equipping of its children. It is popularly noted that evangelistic efforts directed to children and teenagers is most effective. Barna Research Group sounds a wakeup call; it states that only one quarter of all decisions for Christ is made after age 21.⁹ The rest are made during the childhood and the teenage years. Another survey undertaken by the International Bible Society indicates that 83% of all Christians make their first commitment to the Lord Jesus between ages 4-14, a time they are in their childhood days or when in their early teenage years.¹⁰ Also, Paul A. Gieschen and others maintain, 85% of all decisions for Christ happens before the age fourteen.¹¹

According to the 2007 Sierra Leone Child Right Act, a child is a person that is below 18 years. In the 2015 National Census the term “child” was redefined to mean, a person of age zero

9. Barna Research Group, “Evangelism Is Most Effective Among Kids,” 2009, accessed June 26, 2020, <https://www.barna.com/research/Evangelism-is-most-effective-among-kids>.

10. Howard Culbertson, “At What Age Do Americans Become Christian?”, accessed November 15, 2022, <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ages.htm>.

11. Paul A. Gieschen, “Evangelizing the World through Christian Schools Education,” October 13 2005, accessed November 15, 2022, <https://transformingteachers.org/en/articles/transformational-education/39-evangelizing-the-world-through-christian-school-education>.

to nine years.¹² Nearly 30% of the total population of 7 million is children. The 2015 census revealed 2,047,168 children found below 10 years across the country.¹³ It is further revealed in the 2017 census that about 40% of the children aged 10-14 are illiterate and those between ages 14-19 are 30% were illiterate.

With regards to the above stated statistic, it appears the age group that signals the end of the primary years and that which begins the teenage years appears to be a strategic developmental stage and for the conversion and the discipleship program of the church. Preteens are referred to as those children that are exiting childhood period and are transiting into the teenage stage of their lives. The preteen then, could be termed as one who is found between age 9 to age 13. This age group is generally characterized by a keen desire for independence and a keen desire to acquire knowledge or ideas which forms the basis of their teenage philosophy. To the youth worker, this age is regarded as the stage of laying the bricks that could determine the life of this age group. This period becomes strategic for the training of the child.

Realizing the potency of the Word of God to germinate, grow and to bear fruit when it falls on fertile ground, especial on virgin soil, makes the author believe that there is no other soil so fertile and crucially important to grow the Word of God as that of the child's heart, especially when in the preteen years. It is therefore the purpose of this project to bring along a biblical way to fulfill the church's Great Commission. Besides, this project seeks to understand why the Word of God should occupy a central place in the Christian School. Furthermore, this paper seeks to briefly supply biblical, theological and historical basis for effective outreach in pluralistic

12. Araba M. M. Forson and Alimamy Yalancy, *Sierra Leone 2015 Population and Housing Census: Thematic Report on Children, Adolescents, and Youth*, October 2017, accessed November 15, 2022, https://www.statistics.sl/images/StatisticsSL/Documents/Census/2015/sl_2015_phc_thematic_report_on_children_adolescents_and_youth.pdf, 17.

13. Forson and Yalancy, *Census*, 9.

society. In this way the Word of God occupies prominent and a distinct place in the Christian school ministry.

The Research Question

This project will respond to the following questions: What is the key way of reaching kids for Christ at Zion Ministries Elementary School? And secondly, how can Zion Elementary school in a key way reach its pupils for Christ through the proclamation of God's Word?

The Research Limitation

This project will focus on how Zion Ministries Primary school can evangelize and disciple children through gospel devotions. In addition, this paper in a key way focuses on pupils within the range of ages 10 through 12. Furthermore, it does not make a survey of all primary schools. This work would only take survey from two schools – Zion Ministries Elementary and Methodist primary schools. It is an experimental study of the effectiveness in teaching the gospel as an evangelism and educational ministry in Zion Primary school. And lastly, it is a work that would also help the Christian worker to discover relevant approach to reach children who are from Muslim background.

The Research Methodology

This project will consist of five chapters, outlined as follows: Chapter one will serve as the introduction; Chapter two serves as the Biblical and Theological foundations for the project, including the need to evangelize and explain what the gospel message is; Chapter three is a Literature review on books related to the gospel message and to reaching or ministering to

Muslims kids; Chapter four is a survey of 10- to 12-year-old pupils at Zion school and includes a pretest and posttest. These are questions determine the level of understanding of the gospel message; chapter five contains an evaluation of the pretest and posttest questions. This will tell what the findings were, what the observations were, what the recommendations are, and what the conclusion is.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

The church's ministration of the gospel should not only involve the children but should begin with them. Too often children are seen as liabilities rather than assets. God does place high value on the children and thus calls on parents and disciples towards the same. The importance of children could be noted by the Israelite's strong desire for children. In fact, it became a lifetime challenge for a couple not to have children. The Hebrew couple in Bible times took the Biblical command "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it'" (Genesis 1:28, NIV) literally. One of the goals for a Jewish marriage is to have children and build a secure and contented family. Through this the family can be remembered after the parents have passed away. To die without descendants could make the entire family to be wiped out or forgotten. Although they gladly accepted the girl-child, the boy-child was most desired. The psalmist speaks of children being "an heritage of the Lord and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalm 127:3). The story of Rachel and Leah, Jacob's wives illustrate how important for the woman to give her husband children. Rachel cried, "Give me children or else I die" (Genesis 30:1). Under the Old Testament a large family was considered a blessing while having no children was regarded as a curse (Genesis 30:2, 18; 33:5; 48:9; Deuteronomy 7:13), while under the New Covenant the presence of many children is not necessarily evidence of divine favor or a divine curse. Today, large families could not be a blessing if the children are not properly and well cared for and brought to salvation in Christ.

It is noted that the parents not only desired to have children but were fully aware of the sacred responsibility that went with having children. They understood the divine responsibility of

training/nurturing the children in order to have a godly stock to continue Israel's covenant relationship with Yahweh and to ensure their children's present and future blessings. Ministry to children emanates from the importance God places on the child. God reaching out with His Son, the Word of God reflects the immense love He has for mankind, including the child. (John 3:16). God's demonstrative love becomes the basis and model for the Christian ministry. Trumbull has well noted, "Loving and winning are inseparable portion of the obligations resting on every disciple of Christ."¹

The result of Christian education should also be a motivating factor for reaching out with the gospel message to children. An old Chinese philosopher who was asked what had been his greatest found-joy in life; responded, "A child," he said, "going down the road singing after asking me the way."² The divine command to preach borne out of the divine love and the divine result of Christian education become the compelling factor for the teaching ministry of the Christian.

The Christian teaching ministry should be validated by scriptures. The purpose, method and results of ministry are to be seen both in the old and New Testaments. Jesus declared the purpose of His coming in John 10:10. This profound and comprehensive statement from the lips of Jesus Himself was meant to be fulfilled. He showed the method by which this could gain fulfillment: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20). The method by which this was to be fulfilled was through teaching the Word of God. All who hears and obeys this Word receives God's blessings. Turning to God was the goal and the inevitable result of teaching the word of

1. C. H. Tumbull, *Teaching and Teachers* (New York: Charles Scribners & Sons, 2010), 284.

2. D. V. Hurst. *And He Gave Teachers* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1955), 35.

God. David could declare, “Then I will teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee” (Psalm 51:13).

The Bible becomes indispensable for the exercise of all what the Great Commission is. It is the Bible that gives the mandate and the message for evangelism. Additionally, it is the Bible that does supply the perfect and a godly model and it does give power for the evangelistic pursuit. Paul acknowledging this fact writes, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jews first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). It is well noted by Stott, only biblical formulation of the gospel should be regarded as permanent nominative, any other attempt made to proclaim or contextualize the gospel in modern terms must agree with the authentic expression of the gospel message in the bible.³ The Bible is the primary lens through which the Christian educator perceives and prescribes the character of Christian education. The scripture’s claim of revelation and inspiration qualify it to be the basis for belief. Having the Bible as God’s living and authoritative word revitalizes Christian education at its root. The authoritative word of God becomes foundationally vital for the ministry of the church. “Such theology does not spring from an existential base devoid of absolutes and certainties, but from revelatory truth.”⁴

The practice of the church to reach the child with the gospel message must begin on the right premises if it should fulfill its rightful goal. In order to derive the desired goal, the foundation for the practice should not begin with what teaching the gospel can teach about the scripture but rather, it should begin with the inquisition, what can the scripture teach us about teaching? This marks the primary difference between secular education and that of Christian

3. John R. W. Stott, “The Bible in World Evangelization,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library 1981), 3-6.

4. Edward L. Hayes, “Establishing Biblical Foundations,” in *Christian Education: Foundations for the Future*, ed. Robert E. Clark, Lin Johnson, and Allyn K. Sloat (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 31.

education. The former is solely based on secular perspectives. Kenneth Gangel makes this point clear,

The distinction falls not between New Covenant and Old Covenant truth, for evangelicals affirm the Old Testament base for Christian education. But the difference comes in articulating an education distinctly based upon theological proposition derived from the text of scripture rather than education developed to perpetuate and propagate the tenets of a designated religious system.”⁵

This marks the primary difference between secular education and that of Christian education. The former is solely based on secular perspectives. Kenneth Gangel makes this point clear, “The distinction falls not between New Covenant and Old Covenant truth, for evangelicals affirm the Old Testament base for Christian education. But the difference comes in articulating an education distinctly based upon theological proposition derived from the text of scripture rather than education developed to perpetuate and propagate the tenets of a designated religious system.”⁶

Endeavour in Christian education becomes obscured and lost without being grounded in Bible based teaching. The basis of Christian Education is the Bible, the bedrock and the fertile soil for Christian education. It should be observed as the standard, norm, canon and text for teaching. It is the guideline for all the subjects in Christian education. Exploring the biblical foundation gives exclusive confidence of the truth man should know and obey as the chief end. The biblical revelation of God’s dealing with His covenant people Israel, the examples of Jesus and His apostles form the seedbed for what we know today as Christian education. We look to the biblical record for both its origin and form. Its purpose, methods, and instructional expressions are rooted in the scriptures.

5. Kenneth Gangel, “What Christian Education Is,” in *Christian Education: Foundations for the Future*, ed. Robert E. Clark, Lin Johnson, and Allyn K. Sloat (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 14.

6. Gangel, “What Christian Education Is,” 14.

All the expression “Christian education” implies in our contemporary world must somehow be subjected to the scrutiny of the explicit and implicit teachings of the scriptures. This in no way limits the church, by promoting an exact reproduction of primitive style. Rather, Hayes correctly states, “Rather, the biblical wellspring of principles and examples is vital to the creation, perpetuation, and renewal of Christian education endeavors.”⁷ No amount of misunderstanding and opposition directed to the evangelistic pursuit by the unbeliever should warrant a change or alteration of the biblical message. John Stott rightly asserts, “Biblical Christians need biblical incentives knowing the Bible to be the revelation of God and of his will.”⁸

The teaching exercise of the church should not only flow from the Bible but should at the same time take into consideration the contemporary setting and the developmental needs of the learner. Christian education is meant to be “a servant and not the master of revelation.” Its primary focus is not on the human being but on God. Though the human factor cannot be ignored and considered unimportant, the beginning point should be God.⁹ Kenneth Gangel well notes, “Education for the early Hebrews focused on learning about God. The Bible’s opening statement leaves no room for flexibility regarding its main topic (Genesis 1:1). God controlled the events in the lives of His people; He initiated the covenants and law; God established leaders to instruct His people regarding personal and corporate righteousness. And when a generation failed to follow God’s truth, turmoil inevitably followed (Judges 2:10-15).

It is also important to note that along the God centeredness of the teaching program of the Hebrews, there was a focus on Scriptures as the absolute truth for guidance. God’s people even long before the availability of the written scriptures, messages delivered by God’s anointed

7. Hayes, “Establishing Biblical Foundations,” 31.

8. Stott, “The Living God is a Missionary God,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library 1981), 10.

9. Hayes, “Establishing Biblical Foundations,” 32.

servants were regarded to be absolute. Whenever God spoke through His servants of old, He left no room for discussion and flexibility for differing views.¹⁰ The third major conspicuous focus of the Hebrew education in the Hebrew scripture is the family centeredness. It is realized that the focus on God, begins with the Jewish home and family. To them the responsibility of teaching children becomes the sacred obligation of the parents and the commencement of ministry. The families were representatives of the nation of Israel. Moses stood before the entire Israelites and reminded them on how the covenant of God was with the nation represented by the families. (Ex 19-20).

The Biblical Foundation

In the face of the plethora of religious truths the need for an absolute Truth becomes very much needful. A man needs a rock on which to anchor his lever as he endeavors to move the world or any small part of it. The Christian school should seek to plant the eternal Word in the lives of its young pupils, “Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away.” (Matt 24:35). God has revealed that which is eternally good, true, and beautiful. The communication of biblical concept secures and strengthens young lives on firm foundation with well-defined guidelines as they move with steadfast purpose towards eternally important goals. The scriptural foundation for the practice defines and gives insight into the purpose, the mode and the objective of ministering the Word that could prove most suitable for character molding and spiritual formation of the next generation. This chapter gives highlights of some relevant scriptural and theological foundations or bases that could supply exclusive confidence of the truth one should know and obey about the proclamation of the gospel to the child.

10. Gangel, “What Christian Education Is,” 15.

Education in the Old Testament

The Hebrew word *lamad* (teach) which is translated in the Septuagint by the word *didasko* which occurs about 100 times in the Old Testament (OT) does not primarily denote the communication of knowledge and skill but rather instructs on how one should live his life (Deuteronomy 11:19; 20:18). Moses considered teaching as an instruction given from God (Deuteronomy 6:1-9). It is evident in the entire Old Testament Scripture that God expected the Patriarchs to train their family members in the ways of the Lord. Whenever they obeyed this spiritual responsibility as commanded to families, the entire nation became prosperous and when parents became slack in fulfilling what the Lord had commanded them in respect of teaching or training their children God's Word they paid severely for disobedience and became spiritually poor.

The Pentateuch

The evidence of training the child appeared early in Scripture. There is an implication of Adam and Eve training their children in the Way of the Lord. It is revealed in Genesis that Adam and Eve carried out the responsibility of caring for God's creation and trained their children in accordance with God's plan. This is evident in Genesis 4. Cain and Abel could have been following what they had learnt from their parents by the offering each made. The rejection of Cain's offering and the acceptance of Abel's brought serious family disorder and great pain when Cain rebelled and killed his brother. God's purpose for making the scriptures available is to teach man His plan of redemption and how man can become more like the Lord Jesus Christ in his earthly journey. There are many references in both the Old Testament and the New Testament that do give commands regarding spiritual development. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 is a

prime example of parents being instructed or having the responsibility to teach and model spiritual growth. “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk to them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” In Deuteronomy 31:12, Moses commanded Israel to assemble all the Israelites including the children to hear the Word of God and learn to fear the Lord and to follow him all what the word commanded.

Also in Deuteronomy, Moses told the Israelites that God had commanded him to gather the people including the children to hear his words in order to learn the fear of God. “Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when he said to me, ‘Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children’ (Deuteronomy 4:10, NIV). In the midst of this review of the law, Moses affirmed the command of God to “teach” the law. He emphasized that it should be taught diligently and regularly. “Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:7, NIV). He further declared how the Lord commanded him at the giving of the law to teach them His statutes and judgments (Deuteronomy 4:14) in order to obey them. This command and Moses’ obedience in passing it on is the divine origin of an extensive teaching ministry in the Old Testament’s economy.

Under the Mosaic Law the early education of a child was delegated to the Hebrew parents. The home was expected to be the school for the children, and the parents as the teachers. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). Early education was carried on in the home as they grow up with their parent—more or less with the mother (Proverbs 6:20; 31:1; 2 Timothy 1:5). The girl child continued her training under her mother until her marriage. Some well-to-do families employed

tutors (1 Chronicles 27:32) to help teach the child to read and write. The greatest stress in the education of the child was laid on the Torah. The boys were trained also to farm, tend cattle and trade. Religious training for the boy started in his fourth year, or sooner if he could speak clearly. The girl also began her religious training early under her mother. Later times the children took part in Sabbath and Passover festivals. The boys attended synagogues and school regularly.¹¹ Children were to subject to the father and the father in turn was around to protect them. Respect for and obedience to parents was strongly upheld by the public (Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 6:20).

Celebrations and feasts observed by the Israelites were designed for the learning of the children. It was meant to cause the children to ask questions about the practices (Exod12:26). The tabernacle, the temple and other prominent features were meant to serve as object lessons for the understanding of divine truth. In addition to the parents as teachers the priests and Levites were also teachers engaged with special schools for the training of young prophets. The order of prophets arose, beginning with Moses and continuing through the proceeding generations.¹²

The Historical books

As maintained by Gangel, the historical books add few new truths regarding the teaching and learning process of the Israelites.¹³ All the instruction and practice developed in the Pentateuch are largely maintained in the Historical books. However, new kinds of teachers come to the scene – the Judges who ruled and the prophets who proclaimed. Eli for example tutored Samuel and Samuel in turn taught the first two Kings of Israel. Continuity of educating the children begun in the Pentateuch was maintained through the parents. Kenneth summarizes

11. Cecil B. Murphey, ed., *The Dictionary Biblical Literacy* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), 322.

12. Fred H. Wright, *Manners and Customs of the Bible Land* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987), 114.

13. Gangel, "What Christian Education Is," 17.

the relationship between the Pentateuch and the Historical books on the teaching assignments as he quotes Egenast:

How then does the education of the young proceed in Israel? God commands that they obey their parents as next to him in importance. The father acts like the priest to the family. He hands on the tradition to the family; he does so in answer to the question of his children (Ex. 12:26 f.), and his answer is a confession of God's saving activity toward Israel. The children are told of this not only in words, but also by means of impressive signs in the form of monumental stones (Jos. 4:6 21 ff.).¹⁴

After Moses, the priests and the Levites followed with the "schools of the prophets" responding to Israel's religious needs that became evident. After the exile or perhaps during the exile as maintained by some, a whole system of schools known as the synagogue schools emerged. Every Israelite child was required to learn the law, spending much time studying it (2 Chronicles 17:7-12). The rise and decline of Israel as a nation paralleled the stress that was put on the teaching of the Holy Scripture. Aware of this need, Samuel resolved to teach his people "the good and the right way." Also, King Jehoshaphat seeking to combat idolatrous influences trained 16 teachers and deployed them to all the cities of Judea to teach them from the Book of the law. As a result, the fear of the Lord came upon the entire kingdoms around them and the kingdom experienced peace, war ceased. He began receiving presents and tributes and as a result began exceedingly great.

Israel also realized another outstanding revival that came as a direct result of the Word of God's word under Ezra and Nehemiah. In Nehemiah chapter eight we find a graphic account of the return of the teaching ministry and its impact on the nation. "They read from the book of the law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read" (Nehemiah 8:8, NIV). It is certain they received, reiterated, and restated it over and again. This became an unequal revival in Israel since Joshua's leadership (Nehemiah 8:17). One

14. Gangel, "What Christian Education Is," 17.

could be right to say that Ezra's spectacular success could be rightly attributed to his devotion to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and his emphasizes on teaching the decrees and laws (Ezra 7:10). Some scholars have attributed the change in the pattern of the Jewish education from this point to Ezra's revival.¹⁵

The Wisdom Literature

In Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon the teaching focus becomes more devotional and practical. Notwithstanding the general focus remains to be God and his Word. In these writings, wisdom, instruction, and physical discipline appear to be common. It is observed that three-fifths of the references made in scripture to wisdom is found in the wisdom literature. Wisdom comes from the Greek word, *Sophia*, though it could be skill in art or craft and economic shrewdness it is most commonly reflect godly attitudes that enables one to have mastery of his life (Proverbs 8:32-36). In the Hebraic worldview, wisdom literature was intensely practical, and resulted in successful living, when applied to the heart. This wisdom originates from above, God-given (Job 12:13; Isaiah 31:2; Daniel 2:20-23). The universe, man, and all that is created are all products of the creative work of God (Job 10:8; Psalm 104:24; Proverbs 3:19; Jeremiah 10:12). True wisdom is revealed by the fear of God (Proverbs 9:10).

To many, wisdom is considered to be the mere art of learning how to succeed in life and was confined to the philosophical study of the essence of life. Though it generally carries a secular concept, referring to any human craft, or skill, it was related to articulating religious and socio-moral aspects of human competence and virtue in relation to Yahweh. As Raymond C. Van Leeuwen maintains, ancient wisdom's thought and practice are never secular, even where

15. Gangel, "What Christian Education Is," 17.

God is not mentioned.¹⁶ Wisdom was regarded as an integral part of the scriptures essential for faith and practice. From the Wisdom literature it seems that the real essence of wisdom is spiritual. Life is more than just living by a set of rules and being rewarded in some physical manner. Christian educators are called to integrate all areas of knowledge with God's revelation. Such is seen to be the quest of David as he requested “teach me thy path” (Psalm 27:11; 51:13) Physical discipline in the book of Proverbs introduces a dimension of physical correction which had not been so clearly seen in the Pentateuch, Historical books and the rest of the Old Testament scripture (Proverbs 13:24; 17:10; 22:15; 29:15, 17).¹⁷

The Prophet Isaiah

The School of the Prophets could have come about due to the moral decline of the priesthood under Eli and his wicked sons. Levites were trained in this school to teach the law. Such school was located at Ramah, over which Samuel presided; and where David fled while fleeing from Saul (1 Samuel 19:19-21). One could have been at Gibeah (1 Samuel 10:5, 10) also at Gilgah, Bethel and Jericho (2 Kings 2:1; 3:5; 4:38). These schools definitely existed for the teaching of the law and the history of Israel and also the cultivation of sacred music and poetry.¹⁸

Following the teaching of the Historical books and the wisdom literature it is evident that the nation which had the privilege of been taught by God and was given His Word for both Personal and corporate living now faced judgment and exile because of its disobedience. The Prophets became teachers both before and after the exilic visitation. In the prophets we see the

16. Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, “Wisdom Literature,” in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer and Craig G. Bartholomew (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 848.

17. Gangel, “What Christian Education Is,” 18.

18. Wright, *Manners and Customs of the Bible Land*, 115.

roll and description of the scribes who were the professional class of teachers, through their writings helped to document and preserve both the oral and writing of Israel. They served as “copyists, editors and interpreters of God’s truth. The scribes taught through the methods of public discussion, questions and answers, memorization, involving the exact verbal reproduction of the teacher’s words, stories, the oral laws, proverbs, epigrams, parables, beatitudes, and allegories.”¹⁹ Besides these educational methods, Isaiah instructed that the truth of the word of God must be taught, “precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10).

The period of the prophets was followed by the 400 years of silence, the inter-testament period which ended with the initiation of a more refined teaching by the coming of the incarnate Christ, the Master Teacher. Thus, His arrival fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy quoted by Jesus concerning Zebulun and Naphtali, “The people who sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up” (Matthew 4:16).

Education in the New Testament

Cues for Christian education in the New Testament are derived from a cluster of sources. The teachings of Jesus, the apostolic preaching and writings, and the worship and fellowship of the early Christian form the basis of the teaching ministry found in the New Testament, rooted in the soil of Judaism.²⁰ The New Testament teachings begin with Jesus. However, this does not ignore the past, it is the teachings of Jesus that brings fresh understanding.

19. A. Elwood Scanner, ed., *Exploring Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 41-42.

20. Hayes, “Establishing Biblical Foundations,” 33.

The Gospels

In the New Testament, the word, ‘gospel,’ refers to the revelation of God’s plan for reconciling man to Himself by forgiving his sins and by transforming his character. The gospel is the story of God’s gift of salvation through the person and work of Christ which the church has been commissioned to proclaim (Mark 16:15; Acts 20:24; Ephesians 1:21). The impact of the life, death, and the resurrection of Christ compelled his disciples to present His message to the general public. In the gospels we find the perfect teacher, the incarnated Word, who is the perfect model for the teaching ministry. To desire to become like Him becomes the greatest and most honorable ambition a teacher could have. His teaching transformed the lives of His hearers; and also empowered them for service. His position, His message, the weight of His person, and His methods give illuminating insight and model to his followers for the extension of His life-changing and empowering discipleship program. As the Christian teacher’s best example, Hurst has well stated,

With a proper spoken word, a look of compassion, a probing question, a startling statement, a bit of revelation or a moment of silence Jesus led men out of themselves into a new confidence, joy, and peace. No man has so influenced the course of the world events through changing the lives of individuals as did Jesus. His sayings influenced men; His attitudes influenced men; His life influenced men. Truly, He is the supreme example. Every [Christian] teacher will do well to sit at His feet and ‘learn’ of Him.²¹

The earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus could be correctly described by the word ‘teach.’ It is noted, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues” (Matthew 4:23a). Also, “And He went through the cities and villages, teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem.” (Luke 13:22a). The word “teach,” or “teaching,” is used fifty-eight times in the gospel to describe the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus. Saint John’s description of Jesus as the “Word” (John 1:1) could be found in consonant with the teaching ministry of the Lord since the obvious

21. Hurst, *And He Gave Teachers*, 54.

function of a word is to facilitate communication from one person to another. In this regard, Jesus becomes God's ultimate expression of Himself to mankind.

Jesus gave a pattern for the teaching he later called for. He made his disciples by calling them to be followers and he also trained these followers. His primary ministry to his disciples was teaching. Benson notes that, of the ninety times the Lord Jesus was addressed in the gospel account, sixty times he was addressed rabbi or teacher.²² Even during times of emotional stress or turmoil they called him Master or teacher (Mark 4:38). Jesus' ministry to the disciples was mainly a period of listening and learning to his teaching. Therefore, they were referred to as disciples- learners. Jesus exalted the teaching ministry. Other acts like miracles Jesus performed, were primarily a means to an end –teaching. His journeys were teaching missions. His entire life He lived among men was a commentary declaring the important of his teaching ministry

Jesus's Early Jewish Education (Home and Synagogue)

It seems obvious that the scripture was part of Jewish home during the times of Christ. Growing up as a boy in his Nazareth home must have afforded him to get acquainted with the recital prayer referred to as the *Shema*, a prayer comprising of three different passages of scriptures from the Pentateuch. At the age of 12 years a Jewish boy had to be able to repeat these prayers. The three passages that formed the *shema* are Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41. It is believed that after the return from the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Jesus would borrow the manuscript from the synagogue of Nazareth if He did not personally own a copy. It must be without doubt he spent so much time reading it, which accorded him the ability of been so vast in the Scriptures, especially the books of Moses and the prophets. Besides, he was often found making reference to Isaiah and Jeremiah.

22. Clarence H. Benson, *History of Christian Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943),31.

The widespread use of the *Shema* in Christ's days in most cases became mere form of recitation with little or no meaning; in most cases, the recitations became vain as the heathen prayer.²³ This could have prompted the caution Jesus gave, "But when ye pray use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking" (Matthew 6:7). Knowledge of the teaching ministry, a sense of the urgency about the work of the teacher and his consecration is not enough. The teacher in order to have an efficient and forceful ministry must be equipped for the task ahead, needs preparation.

Though not quite sure, it is believed that the synagogue schools started way back to the time of Babylon's exile.²⁴ By the time of Jesus it had become an established institution of learning among the Jews. The Jews gathered on every Sabbath at the synagogue to listen to a rabbi read and explain the scripture. "It is believed this faithful practice of the Jews made the Muslims to recognize them as the people of the Book."²⁵ Apart from the general teaching of the word on the Sabbath in the Synagogue School, special classes were organized to have boys come to study the scripture under qualified teachers. This became supplementary religious education the boys received from their parents. It is also noted that Jewish parents were very much concerned about who taught their children. They were more concerned with the character of teachers than with their teaching ability.²⁶ Although they were naturally concerned about the teacher's competence they were, nonetheless, more concerned that teachers become examples to the children.

23. Wright, *Manner and Custom of the Bible Lands*, 122.

24 Cecil B. Murphey, ed., *The Dictionary Biblical Literacy* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), 322.

25. Murphey, *The Dictionary Biblical Literacy*, 322.

26. Murphey, *The Dictionary Biblical Literacy*, 322.

Some first century Jewish writings give some partial lists of what the Jewish teacher involved with children's training ought to be. The following were expected: The teacher must not be a lazy person, must have an even temper, must not be partial, must not be impatient, must not compromise the dignity of the child, never discourage the child, show sin to be repulsive and therefore be avoided, punish wrong behaviors and must be keeper of his promise.²⁷ Apart from the scripture, the Jewish boys learned acceptable etiquette, music, practical knowledge and warfare. The boy David was acclaimed to be skilled in playing musical instruments, a man of war, prudent in speech, and the Lord was with him. (1 Sam 16:18). David indeed epitomized the well-rounded education of his day.²⁸

Jesus the Master Teacher

The coming of Jesus brought unique and much freshness to the teaching ministry. Jesus came from God and taught God's message as one having authority. Jesus used teaching as the chief vehicle of communication. "Teaching was His chief business. He was often a healer, sometimes a worker of miracle, frequently preacher, but always a teacher."²⁹ The presence of Jesus dominates all the four gospels. His incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection present us great teaching material. However, the Master Teacher's example should be the model for Christian Education. Studying the gospel, one comes to appreciate the fact that Jesus had holistic educational philosophy. He didn't only know what He was to teach, but He as well knew how to teach. To him learning was more than listening and that teaching was more than just telling.

27. Murphey, *The Dictionary Biblical literacy*, 322.

28 Murphey, *The Dictionary Biblical literacy*, 322.

29. Hayes, "Establishing Biblical Foundations," 36.

Kenneth O. Gangel throws light on how Jesus became such an effective teacher without a fixed classroom, an overhead projector, amplifiers etc., states,

The presence and power of the Son of God dominate the first four books of the New Testament. Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection are essential, of course, but His modeling/mentoring role as Master Teacher has provided Christian educators a poignant demonstration for almost two thousand years. Forty-five times the gospels call Jesus 'teacher,' and fourteen times they refer to Him as 'rabbi.'³⁰

The qualities that make Jesus the unique and the greatest Master Teacher is built on His authority, His testimony and position, His message, His person and His weight, His methods and models. Concerning His authority, Matthew's closing record of the Sermon on the Mount notes, "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law." (Matt7:28-29 NIV). The authority of Jesus could not only have been recognized by his mastery of the message he proclaimed but could also be observed in how united his life was with the unique message he proclaimed and the demonstration of that authority.

His testimony and Position spoke of Him to be a teacher. His position proved Him a teacher, His message, the weight of His person, the characteristics of His teaching, all spoke of being a teacher. His disciples, those who lived with Him, listened to Him, and watched him in all manner of circumstances could speak of his position of being a teacher. It is stated that of ninety times in the gospel account He was found addressed, sixty times a teacher or rabbi.³¹ Jesus considered Himself a Himself a teacher (Matthew 4:23; 5:2; Mark 6:34; John 13:13). His disciples considered him a teacher (Luke 9:33; 21:7; Mark 4:38). His inquirers called Him "teacher" (Matthew 19:16; Mark 12:32; John 3:2;). His enemies also called Him "teacher"

30. Gangel, "What Christian Education Is," 19.

31. Benson, *History of Christian Education*, 31.

(Matthew 22:16). Even today is popularly considered a teacher or a great teacher for those who have personally experience Him could say He is the greatest of all teachers.

Added to the qualities that made Jesus the teacher's model of all times is His message. Jesus had a distinguished message. He had divine message backed by divine authority. He was seen as a man one would say intoxicated with a message. He had a message from the Father. This was clearly revealed in Christ' own words: "But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me" (John 5:36; 14:10). The message of Jesus was a message from God; He truly heard from heaven. It is this same message He has sent his disciple with when he declared, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). To have a sense of message to declare is a vital thing to the Christian teacher. Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet. He declared, "But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jeremiah 20:9). Jeremiah had an inner urge, a strange desire, what could be referred to "a spiritual heartburn" that could be satisfied only by delivering the message, as also the case of Paul (Romans 1:15; Galatians 4:19) and many others.

The master teacher's message was not only from the Father, but a message directed to individuals and concerning the individual's relationship with God. The message was for individuals. His encounter with Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman and the two men on the Emmaus Road to whom Jesus opened the scriptures (Luke 24:32) could serve as some examples. Jesus seemed to have favored individuals more. Along this line, H. H. Horne has stated, Jesus began with individuals continued with crowds and ended with individuals during the three

successive main periods of His ministry.”³² Robert Coleman also takes note of the same, Jesus focused on preparing a nucleus of people—His disciples—to win individuals although at times they ministered to crowds as He did.³³ His message uplifted men. The greatest thing done to emphasize the dignity of the individual is seen in God sending his only begotten Son with a message to the individual; all of the individual needs, whether spiritual, physical or psychological were satisfied in Christ. The spiritual needs were met with the provision of a new life as it was told Nicodemus (John 3:3).

Added to the authority and the message of the Master Teacher that gave Him such unique standing was the weight of His person found in the unity of his life and message. His life showed through what he taught, and His teaching portrayed His life. In other words, there was unity of His life and His message. In every respect His life was a fulfillment of what He ever taught. This congruence could be seen in the following few mentioned examples as highlighted by Hurst:

1. He taught meekness “Blessed are the meek...” (Matthew 5:5; 5:39). He showed this in the garden of Gethsemane when they came to arrest him.
2. He taught service, “And whosoever of you will be chief shall be a servant of all (Mark 10:44, 45), also “For even the son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister” (Matthew 25:40). Jesus’ life as a life of service to the weak.
3. Jesus taught self-denial “If any man will come after me...” (Matthew 10:39; 16:24). He lived a life of self-resignation. He truly denied Himself both in life and in death. He carried His cross and He gave His life as a ransom.

32. H. H. Horne, *Jesus, The Master Teacher* (New York: Association Press, 2012), 142.

33. Robert Coleman, *The Master’s Way of Personal Evangelism* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1997), 10.

4. Jesus taught forgiveness “For as ye forgive men their trespasses...” (Matthew 6:14; 18:21, 22, 35; 26:50; Luke 23:34).
5. Jesus taught the need for righteousness. He said, “Except your righteousness shall exceed...” Matthew 5:20. Also he said, “Be ye therefore perfect...” (Matthew 5:48).³⁴

Added to his being united with his message that gave him an outstanding credence as the Master Teacher is the characteristic of His teaching. The following are some characteristics of the Master teacher’s teaching that portrayed His unique teaching ability:

1. He demonstrated faith in people, He believed in people, in man. His call and training of men demonstrated His belief in people. His choice of calling and worked with them could be based on a “long Look” He saw what the master artist would make out of them. For example, when he saw Peter, he as well saw what Peter could become. The same way He saw Nathaniel (John 1:47, 50).
2. He employed simple appeal. Jesus had the ability of teaching profound truth in a simple manner so that even the most uneducated could understand. He never desired to impress His hearers with His great knowledge, nor was he inclined to establish Himself as a man of letters. He simply spoke in language the hearers could understand.
3. He employed a positive appeal. His teachings were never crowded with negativity but rather with positivity. It was not teaching filled with “I don’ts but rather what to do. He could say, “I came not to judge...” (John 12:47, 48).
4. His teachings were backed by prayer. An example of this could be illustrated with the 17th chapter of John where we have prayer from the lips of Christ most of it on behalf of His disciples.

34. Hurst, *And He Gave Teachers*, 64-66.

5. He taught them patiently and deliberately. Though the disciples often times seemed slow to learn and to grasp the significance of his teaching He exercised patience in teaching them. The disciples at first, they misunderstood and misapplied His utterances, yet his patient and deliberate teaching paid off.
6. He taught in an intense manner yet poised. He drove the money changers who were misusing the temple with their trade. He also spoke of “whitewashed tombs and blind leaders.”
7. He loved His pupils. His love for His disciples was manifested when he looked at Peter; His love was seen in His daily self-sacrifice on behalf of disciples. It was seen in His prayer for his disciples. It was also manifested in the compassion he had for the multitude. It also showed when he wept at Lazarus’ tomb. It was shown when he hung on the cross. He was willing to give his life for his pupils. Love is the cord that binds the teacher to the pupils. It enables the teacher to do his best.³⁵

In addition to Hurst’s list that portrays Jesus’ unique teaching ability is His use of parables. Parables were one of the major methods the Master teacher communicated the biblical truth to the understanding of his audience. The word *parable* literally means “brought alongside.” In the Bible, they are short stories about familiar subjects that are used to illustrate a spiritual truth. They communicate profound spiritual truth and challenges deeply. Jesus’ parables were meant to drive his hearers towards action and understanding in their own lives. The parables of Jesus helped his hearers visualize and understand lessons He taught. These parables were great teaching tools. Though some of His parables may seem to have been difficult for children to understand, He made sure the lessons taught through these stories were simple and captivating.

35. Hurst, *And He Gave Teachers*, 68-69.

Great Commission

The disciples spent three-and-a-half years with Jesus, giving them the opportunity to see amazing miracles and heard life-changing teaching. It is obviously, the crucifixion and resurrection experience changed everything forever. Having seen Jesus's triumph over death must have caused the disciples to look at their experiences with Him in a whole new light, rendering every post-resurrection interaction with incredible significance. Matthew's Gospel documents all of his experiences as a disciple and he ends the whole story of Christ's ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection by focusing on the responsibility that comes from believing in Jesus' message; at the mountain in Galilee where He had earlier on told to meet with them. Upon seeing Him, they worshipped him, and He said to them, *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age* (Matthew 28:16-20, NIV). These last words in Matthew's Gospel have come to be known as the Great Commission—a term believed to have been first used by the 17th-century missionary Baron Justinian von Welz and popularized by J. Hudson Taylor.³⁶ He took these last words of Jesus about making disciples seriously. He considered it as a command binding on every believer to be obeyed.

Examining Matthew's Great Commission verses closely, Jesus makes the declaration, *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*. This sheds light on the extent and the nature of His authority. It indicates an all-encompassing authority that could only belong to God. With that authority He orders His disciples, *therefore go and make disciples of all nations*. This command evokes something more than just going out to share the gospel and make new Christians. According

36. "Baron Justinian von Welz," GFA Missions, accessed November 15, 2022, <https://gfamissions.org/baron-justinian-von-welz/>.

to Vine, the word ‘disciple’ in Greek is *Mathete* which means a learner and the verb *Manthano*, means, to learn. In contrast, to a disciple is the word ‘teacher’ which in Greek is *didaskalos*, which denotes one who follows one’s teaching³⁷ as the disciples of John (Matthew 9:14); of the Pharisees (Matthew 22:16); of Moses (John 9:28); it is used of the disciples of Jesus.

Four categories of disciples could be note in the scripture: In the wider sense it is used of the Jews who became the adherents of Jesus (John 6:66). Secondly, it is especially used of the 12 Apostles (Matthew 10:1; Luke 22:11). Thirdly, it could refer to all those who indicate that they are His disciples through abiding in His word. John 8:31; 13:35; 15:8. Fourthly, it is found in Acts of the Apostles referring to those who believed upon Him and confessed Him (Acts 6:1, 2, 7; 14:20, 22, 28; 15:10; 19:1, and more). It could be noted in scriptures like John 8:31 and 15:8 that disciples were not only learners but were adherents or imitators of their teachers. Not only males were known as disciples. Tabitha in Acts 9:36, a female was referred to as a disciple. The terms ‘fellow disciples’ and ‘brethren’ are also found denoting collegial relationship. Making disciples go with the implication of investing time and possible resources in disciple-making. If the church should reach out to other places, it must get its converts grow and matured enough to make disciples.

Closely linked with the order to make disciples, is the instruction, *baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit*. The Greek word *Baptizo*, means to Baptize. In the New Testament, it denotes the washing of oneself, meaning to dip into. In the early chapters of the four gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles 1:5; 11:16; 19:4; it is used of the rite performed by John the Baptist, who called on the people to repent in order to receive the remission of their sins. Those who heeded the call came “confessing their sins,” as they

37. W. E. Vine, *New Bible Dictionary: A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meanings for English Readers*. Ed. J. D. Douglas, et al (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers), 318.

acknowledged their unfitness to be included into the Messiah's coming Kingdom. Distinct from John's baptism is the one enjoined by Christ in Matthew 28:19. A baptism meant for believers which shows their identification with Christ's death, burial and resurrection as found in Acts 19:5; Romans 6:3, 4; 1 Corinthians 1:13-17, etc. The phrase in Matthew 28:19, "baptizing them in into the name" in Acts 8:16 from the Authorized version indicates that the baptized person was closely bound to or becomes the property of the one in whose name that person was baptized.

The instruction that follows, *teaching them to do everything I have commanded you*, stands to be the most essential element for the accomplishment in the making of disciples. The twelve disciples spent years with Jesus had been experiencing and absorbing from His transformational teaching ministry. Concluding the Great commission with the words, "*And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*" Jesus reinforce His divine authority, but also intended to serve as encouragement; knowing that the spread of the gospel would not be free from tensions and dangers that could cost the disciples pay the ultimate price for following the Great Commission. Jesus therefore promises to be with His disciples in those difficult times that arise in their execution of His command.

The Master Teacher and The Children

Though there are few references to children in the gospels, the few mentioned do etch in the mind. The Master Teacher was never too busy to receive and interact with children. He rebuked his disciples for failing to perceive the importance of welcoming children. Children have much advantage in Kingdom matters. Parents who brought their kids to Jesus in Mark 10 wanted to secure spiritual blessing given by Jesus as against the disciples who didn't see the necessities.

Another great focus on the children in the gospel is made by Jesus when he set the child in the midst of his audience and taking him in His arms. William Barclay sees this picture to be dearer to most people, asserting the ever importance of children's work.³⁸ The attention, the tenderness, the compassion, the simplicity and the openness received by the child from Jesus could serve as an agenda for children's Christian education (Matthew 19:13; Mark 10:13; Luke 18:15). Jesus cites the humble attitude of the child as that which is needful if one should gain greatness in His kingdom. Robert Coleman commenting on the importance of children in relation to the Kingdom of God sees their dependence upon their parents and others for care, as an expression that reflect a basic attitude of those who renounce self-sufficiency and depend upon the grace of God for salvation.³⁹ Similarly, the teach ability of the children and the tender conscience they possess, enforce their importance. It is therefore important that children learn the gospel early while their hearts are sensitive to the divine spirit. They need to make their choice to follow Christ before a pattern of independence has been hardened by age.

The Lord's teaching on children also makes it absolutely binding to undertake children's ministry (Mark 9:36; Luke 9:48). He made the child a very pattern of the kingdom. To receive a child is to receive no other than Jesus. Unless one becomes like a child one cannot gain entrance into the Kingdom of God.

The Acts of the Apostles

The ministry of the early church and the apostles formed the core for actions, calling all men to repentance, with their message framed on the death, resurrection, and the exaltation of Jesus. The command to teach was carefully observed by the apostles as they went fulfilling the

38. William Barclay, *Educational Ideals in the Ancient World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), 234.

39. Coleman, *The Master's Way*, 7.

Great Commission. The apostolic church was notably a teaching church. After the ascension of Jesus there is a quick move to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the launching of the New Testament church. The church represented by both laity and apostles of Jesus were seen actively involved in the membership of the church and at the same time ministry workers. The Great Commission mandate example with the empowerment of Pentecost turned timid followers into bold preacher- teachers. Those who responded to their message were daily in the temple and in the house of the apostles teaching and preaching Christ (Acts 5:42).

Three areas of emphases observed in the apostolic teaching centered on faith formation, explanation of the faith, and moral development. All these three are evident in the apostolic tradition. Also, in His commission to his disciples, Jesus gave the pattern for that teaching task given to the disciples. They were to teach all nations as they themselves have been taught and at the same time they were train followers in the same commission they received from their master. In this case salvation wasn't the sole goal but should be followed by training. It was for this, Paul and Barnabas spent one whole year in Antioch training the church. Upon their departure "certain prophets and teachers" came in to fill in teaching ministry of that church (Acts 13:1); for this same reason Paul spent three years in Ephesus indoctrinating the believers with the word of God. He also spent one year and six months in Corinth teaching the word of God (Acts 18:11). This became a pattern in training of converts following the act of conversion.

Barnabas' recognition of Paul's gift to teach in Acts 11 is demonstrative of how the early church seriously committed itself to educational ministry. The different gifts manifested in the lives of the members were recognized and utilized to the greater advantage of the church. Barnabas, when he arrived in Antioch exercised his gift of exhortation (encouragement), stabilizing the new believers and leading many to the Lord (Acts 11:19-24). Notwithstanding,

when they discovered that more were required to help build the new converts with an in-depth study of the word, Barnabas was sought for. One he felt was more composed and qualified to carry out that task. He brought Saul from Tarsus (Paul) to serve as the education minister to assist him for a whole year (Acts 11:25-26).

They took Christ at his word and made teaching as reason for their existence, as disciples of Christ. For this cause, they (the apostles) could fearlessly respond to the council of the Sanhedrin who commanded them not to teach and preach (Acts 5:42). The priest and the captains of the temple, the high priest and his associates, the Sadducees were restless about the result of the teaching ministry of the apostles (Acts 4:2, 18; 5:21, 28).

The Pauline Epistles

In the Pauline epistles Paul offers solid emphasis on instructive guidelines which seems to harmonize perfectly the roles of evangelism and edification thus creating balance that is found to be hard to maintain in this twenty first century. Specific dimensions of biblical Christianity are unveiled. An example is seen in the role of the Bible in the educational ministry of Paul. The issue of biblical inerrancies and authorities is dealt with, making the scriptures the absolute rule for faith. In Romans and Galatians Paul develops the doctrine of salvation, among other doctrines based on the authoritative word of God (Romans 10:8-11).

The mention of school master in Galatians has brought a fresh insight or understanding. The reference Paul made to “school master” in Galatians (Galatians 3:24) is said to be formerly misunderstood. The new understanding that emerged from papyri writings is that the individual called “school master” was not referring to headmaster or a teacher, but rather it referred to a faithful slave who was responsible for conducting his master’s sons to and from school

protecting them from harm. In this respect Paul's use of the word "schoolmaster" in Galatians was a comparison where Christ the real teacher and the law like a slave was to conduct the pupil to the teacher.⁴⁰

Archeological discoveries at Ephesus have also revealed that the school of Tyrannus where Paul preached (Acts 19:9) was probably an elementary school, where the teacher taught for few hours in the morning and for few hours in the evening. This school is believed to have been available for Paul's.⁴¹ Besides, in Ephesians, Paul commands, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3) children are to obey while under their parents' care, while the responsibility to honor their parents is for life. To obey means to do as one is told. To honor is to respect and love. Children are not required to disobey God in order to obey their parents.

In the epistles of the Thessalonians, one could quickly see how the Thessalonians letters reveals modeling, pointing out that the message one proclaims in words must be lived by its educators. Paul explains the leadership style he exhibited as "gentle," 'loving,' sharing "encouraging, "comforting" and "fatherly." No doubt Paul's teaching was impactful to the extent Paul could write to commend them, "your faith is growing more and more and the love for every one of you has for each other is increasing" (2 Thessalonians 1:3-4). In this epistle Paul also sought to model the message he preached.

In Timothy and Titus, Paul instructs regarding the quality of their spiritual lives and the extent of their Christian education ministries. In these letters spiritual leaders are expected to rule their own households well and also able to teach (1 Timothy 3:4, 12; Titus 1:6), and the parents

40. Wright, *Manners and Customs of the Bible Lands*, 117.

41. Wright, *Manners and Customs of the Bible Lands*, 117.

to have the absolute duty to provide for their children (2 Corinthians 12:14). In 2 Timothy 3:16 it is revealed that the Word, the absolute source of Christian instruction, inspiration which means “God-breathed”. The word that stands for “teaching” and “instruction” appears over ten times in 1 Timothy alone. With this it could not be wrong to observe that Paul’s purpose was to instruct Timothy how to educate the believers at Ephesus. In the letter to Titus Christian education implications are made. In chapter two, about eight times some form of the word “teach” appears. In addition, the word use of “train” “encourage,” and “rebuke” is used. It is as well observed about five educational groups are mentioned.

In the Pauline epistles, the importance of the ministry of teaching could be observed or noted by Paul’s appointment as a preacher, an apostle and a teacher (2 Timothy 1:11). He also felt that in order to qualify as a bishop one must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2). He also exhorted Timothy to pass on to faithful men the things he had taught that they in turn may be able to teach others also 2 Timothy 2:2. Paul also gave recognition of the teaching ministry by listing it along with apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors. Saint Paul as rightly noted by C. H. Benson could definitely be rated as the second master teacher, next to Christ, the master teacher.⁴²

In the book of Hebrews, one dominant and outstanding educational thrust of the book is the word “discipline” coming from the Greek word is *Paideia* the noun. The verb is *paidecro*. It occurs seven times in chapter 12. Its educational emphasis places orderliness of discipline and the requirement of punishment. The immediate context deals with the heavenly father and his earthly kids. This could well be applied to the classroom setting. When this is applied and heeded it produces harvest of righteousness and peace for those children who have been trained accordingly (Hebrews 12:11).

42. Benson, *History of Christian Education*, 33.

Every Christian ministry exercise should find its root in the Bible the Word of God, the foundation and the final authority for the goals and content of Christian education. Here the Christian finds his heritage from the past and his hope for the future. That makes him part of the great teaching tradition. With the effective use of this instruction the Israelites perpetuated their faith and their way of life as they taught through the parents, the priests, the wise men, the prophets, the temple and the synagogue. Learning from the Master teacher, the disciples spread the Good News through preaching and teaching. God honors such teaching endeavor with His grace. It takes biblical principles of education that do challenge to performing the teaching task with full commitment.

The Theological Foundation of Christian Education

The value of evangelical Christian Education could either rise or fall depending on its theological foundations. A worthy Christian education would endeavor to integrate theological disciplines with the education process.⁴³ The foundation to any sound church ministry is a vital and authoritative theology. Such a theology does not make room for Christian education to emanate from an existential base that is devoid of absolutes and certainties but rather begins with God's revelatory truth. Biblical theology of the Great Commission is aimed at discovering and applying biblical truths and solutions to contemporary ministry and ministry challenges and situations. In short, it is meant to discover and apply.⁴⁴ This study aims to sharpen the understanding, conviction and vision concerning God's mission to the world and our part in it. As noted by Dr. Coleman, the revealed Word of God, the Almighty God, the depravity of man,

43. Hayes, "Establishing Biblical Foundations,"40.

44. Hayes, "Establishing Biblical Foundations,"35.

the incarnate Savior, the fellowship of the gospel, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, and the last things are profoundly foundational Great Commission themes.⁴⁵

The Scriptures Inspired

People that have indeed come in contact with the message of the Bible in an experiential manner that have brought about transformation of their lives through the power of the Holy Spirit could boldly attest that the Bible is a supernatural book. It is the only book that can totally transform one from the inside out and do serve as the final authority or screen of truth for all of life. It is the all-sufficient guide for faith and practice with all subject areas and disciplines in education. It is the book that reveals the mind of God.

Paul writing to Timothy writes, “All scriptures is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The words in the above text, “given by inspiration of God,” are translated from a single Greek word—*God breathed*—and the words, *divinely inspired*, means, *given by God*. The fact of divine productivity of the Holy Writings is explicitly inserted. The word “Inspiration” is defined as the work of the Holy Spirit, by which, through the instrumentality of the personality and the literary talents of its human authors, he constituted the words of the Bible in all of its several parts as his written word to the human race and, therefore, of divine authority and without error.⁴⁶ By the inspiration of the scriptures, it means special divine influence on the minds of the writers of the Bible, in virtue of which their productions apart from errors in transcription, and when rightly

45. Robert Coleman, “Theology of Evangelism,” *Review & Expositor* 77, no. 4 (December 1980):98.

46. J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney, *NIV Compact Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1989), 272.

interpreted, together constitute an infallible rule of faith and practice.

Peter also writes, “Holy men of God spoke “as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21). It is this inspired word that gives authority for service. The Great Commission comes as a mandate based on the Word of God. The inspired scriptures, both oral or written discourse is prompted by the Spirit, exercising special divine influence on the minds of the writers of the bible, in a way that their writing was set apart from errors in transcription, and that when correctly interpreted, together constitute an infallible rule of faith and practice.

It is an observable fact that throughout the ages past and in our contemporary age, the degree of the church’s commitment to the evangelism is commensurate with the degree of its own conviction on the authority of the Bible. The loss of zeal for evangelism has always been reflective of the degree of the declining degree of conviction and commitment to the Bible. The inspired Word of God is the basis of evangelism. As Dr. Coleman rightly states, the evangelistic pursuit of the church does not come as a human deduction and therefore, the premise one begins with largely determines where he lands.⁴⁷ If evangelism emanates from humanity’s darkened, perverted and limited knowledge, it ends with frustration and failure. Success in evangelistic pursuit is only guaranteed when it is based on God’s word. The Bible is the only authoritative rule for faith and practice. Evangelism should draw upon “the whole scope of scripture” and the total meaning of the Christian faith. Dr. Coleman further maintains Biblical theology of evangelism focuses on the purpose of all that God has made known in His word.⁴⁸ It should however be noted that even though the education task of the church flows from the Bible, the absolute word of truth, it does not ignore the contemporary setting and the developmental needs of the pupil; it should be based on the Word of God.

47. Coleman, “Theology of Evangelism,”98.

48. Coleman, “Theology of Evangelism,”98.

The Bible is a united whole. The Bible, though comprising of different books written over a long period of time by great variety of writers, most of whom never knew one another is organically united whole. Such unity could only be explained by the claim of inspiration – the writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit to give God’s message to man. The Old Testament talks about the origin of man’s sin and the preparation God made for the solution of sin’s problem through His own Son, the Messiah. The New Testament brings along the description of the fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan unfolded in the four gospels, talking about the coming of the Messiah. This is followed by the Acts of the Apostles describing the origin and the growth of the church, comprising of the redeemed people. In the epistles one finds the meaning and the implications of the incarnation; and in Revelation the disclosure of how some day all of history will be consummated in Christ. The Old and the New Testaments reflects organic unity. The first is incomplete without the second and the second cannot be understood without the first; together they form God’s revelation to man geared towards the salvation of man.

The Bible reflects God’s glory so that mankind ought to worship and serve Him. It is the sole book that teaches the way to salvation, teaching what one must believe in order to be saved from sin and at the same time teaches what God’s purpose for mankind. It is the Bible, the only rule to direct man on how he may glorify God and live at peace with Him forever. The purpose of the Scriptures is to teach man what he should believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man as the principal teaching of the Scripture. This forms biblical Christianity.

The Sovereign God

In order to have a proper view of God's Kingdom, as noted by Stanley A. Ellisen, it is but essential to recognize his undiminished sovereignty.⁴⁹ Although no formal definition for God is found in the Bible, yet His being and the attributes are displayed on every page. The greatest definition ever found in Christendom, the culture in which the Bible has held a prevailing influence is the one found in the Westminster Shorter Catechism: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."⁵⁰ This does set forth what the Bible assumes and declares concerning God.

God is revealed as utterly unlimited and infinite. He is the creator of the universe including man with a purpose. He is revealed in scripture as personally concerned with His creation, ushering an overwhelming sense of confidence and hope. He portrays Himself though high lifted up, yet always found within the reach of his people. Furthermore, He is revealed as the Triune God. Though the doctrine of the Trinity remains a mystery beyond human sagacity, yet as Dr. Coleman states, "It affords a means by which the structure of God's perfection can be interpreted. God might be seen as the Father in administration, as the Son in revelation, and as the Spirit in operation."⁵¹ The recognition of divine sovereignty is implicit in Salvation. Man is only able to evaluate himself or the neighbor only in the light of who God is. Unless man first recognizes his creator and Lord, he is in no position to evaluate themselves or their neighbors; it

49. Stanley A. Ellisen, "Everyone's Question: What is God Trying to Do?" in *Perspectives on World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 19.

50. Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 316.

51. Coleman, "Theology of Evangelism," 99.

is “only as a person behold their image in their God and Savior can they know who they are and what they are destined to be.”⁵²

God desires to have fellowship with His creation—man. Genesis 3:8-9 shows God’s desire to have fellowship with His creation. He longs for active fellowship with his people. In this regard He offers His unconditional love based on the fact that whosoever comes to Him regardless the faults and makes right with Him. The promise of His abiding presence of fellowship does not only give sense security and encouragement but also assures success for all times.

The Fall of Man and Its Consequence

Man was created good and upright; for God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness (Genesis 1:26, 27). However, man by his voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God. Man’s true standing with God is glaringly and accurately seen in the light of God’s law and holiness. It is only then, he comes to see how short he is, by turning to his own ways. The sinner carried by the deception of the evil one, makes him believe in himself rather than the creator God. This assertion of independence, according to Dr. Coleman does lie at the very heart of sin.⁵³ His expression clearly revealed man’s defiance and rejection. The sinner’s presumptuous act of setting himself as his own authority makes himself a god. Thus, putting man in complete enmity with God, and has become the moral disease of strife and degradation that has spread in all

52. Coleman, “Theology of Evangelism,”98.

53. Coleman, “Theology of Evangelism,”98.

societies and cultures.⁵⁴ Sin faces the punishment of hell. God's loving nature does not annul his wrath against the fallen man, nor does it diminish or contradict God's love for man. Rather, Robert Coleman quoting Donald G. Bloesch writes, "It is not because God's love is limited but because it is unlimited that hell as well as heaven is made necessary."⁵⁵

Evangelism that does not reveal man's rebellion against God's holiness and seen under God's judgment makes it irrelevant to the world that lies in darkness. A theology that does not come to grips with sin, which is the root cause of all human woe is irrelevant to the need of the world. Though the disclosure of rebellion and its consequence may appear to be bad news, makes the gospel shines through proving the way of showing salvation which becomes the true representation of God's ceaseless love for mankind.⁵⁶ In other words, the effect of the fall in the Bible explicitly and implicitly brought not merely an immediate alienation from God for Adam and Eve, it brought guilt and depravity and the cursing of the earth that could only be removed through the redemptive work of the second Adam—Jesus Christ (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 25-49).

Jesus the Savior

Being the revelation of God in the flesh, united in one personality Christ becomes the reconciling Centre for the gospel for all ages. All what took place in salvation before His incarnation was done in anticipation of His coming. The essential message revealed by Christ's incarnation: Jesus lived, died and rose again is attested and proven in history.⁵⁷ Christ's

54. Coleman, "Theology of Evangelism,"98.

55. Coleman, "Theology of Evangelism,"98.

56. Coleman, "Theology of Evangelism,"99.

57. Coleman, "Theology of Evangelism,"99.

redemptive mission culminated at Calvary where he bore our sins, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18). By his atoning sacrifice, Christ made a full and perfect solution that completely satisfied God’s sovereignty. There is nothing accredited to fallen man apart from just believing the finished work of Christ. Nothing earned, it is God that simply moved in and simply did what man can’t. “The bodily resurrection of Christ and his subsequent ascension into heaven brings the cross forcibly to human attention.”⁵⁸

Christ’s purpose in the incarnation was not only to reveal who God is but to be delivered for our offences and to rise again on the third day for our justification (Romans 4:25). If any teaching must be evangelical in essence, then, it must affirm the deity and humanity of Christ. The gospel records about what He claimed Himself to must be true in its entirety, else Christianity is baseless. To deny His claim or “to say His claims were invented by His followers is to discredit both Christ and His disciples and to make the New Testament a travesty.”⁵⁹ Theology of Evangelism is about the Good News. As Robert Coleman and Edwin Lewis hold, the Good News, the joyous sound of the Gospel of Christ, the astounding declaration over the power of death and hell is tidings of victory that cannot be responded to with indifference wherein God himself has personally intervened in human history through the mighty conquest of Jesus.⁶⁰

The Holy Spirit’s Role

It is not enough to have the bible as a minister and to get the hearers encouraged following proper pedagogical principles and employing appropriate methods and material. It is necessary to rely on the Holy Spirit for positive result. The work of the Holy Spirit is necessary

58. Coleman, “Theology of Evangelism,”99.

59. Coleman, “Theology of Evangelism,”99.

60. Coleman, “Theology of Evangelism,”98.

in the teaching and the learning process. It is the Holy Spirit who takes the word effectual in the lives of the audience. The Holy Spirit quickens and makes the word of God alive. He makes the dead to become alive. From creation, the Spirit works to unfold God's redemptive purpose as he supremely focuses on always exalting Jesus. When Christ is exalted, then man could see himself in the light of the atoning work of Christ which moves one to repentance and to accept the gift of salvation. The gospel demands to bring about turning from sin unto God through a childlike trust. It is the only means that guarantees conversion. In this regard Jesus says "except you are born-again of the Spirit and of water (John 3:3). Although the Spirit gives the enabling power to transform yet, the responsibility to respond to the word is man's part. Through faith in Christ the believer receives forgiveness and righteousness. This is followed by the indwelling of the Spirit that brings about the impartation of the divine nature which enables the regenerate person to live the new life in Christ.

In Christ, the Son of God reflects an easily detectable desire to please God (Romans 15:3). The same is true of the new convert, making room for growth, development, maturity and fruitfulness. He now relishes the fellowship of other Christians, and in the presence of God he finds fullness of joy (1 John 1:3-7). Regardless the variation that exists on the subject of sanctification, the new life in Christ is meant to grow into a matured or a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). The degree of the Spirit of God in the believer produces the Christ like character manifested by that believer.

The Holy Spirit brings gifts to the church for effective ministry. These gifts are not for outward display of one's abilities for self-aggrandizement. It is for the edification of the body of Christ. Edification is defined as growing in the depth and fullness of one's understanding of Christ and all else in relationship to Him and in the quality of one's personal relationship with

him.⁶¹ The gift of teaching is the supernatural endowment of the Spirit to expound, to explain and apply the truth of God. The believers in fellowship are taught by the Holy Spirit.

In the face of rising claims to Spiritual gifts and the prediction of falsified operations of the gift of the Spirit could naturally lead to the question of how to determine the operation of a true Spiritual gift. The following could give a clue for the execution of true biblical gifts: First; its endowment must go to discharge a God giving purpose, enhancing the edification of the body. Second, it must see teaching as an enjoyable experience; and third; the fruit of that ministry must reflect the blessing of God's teaching ministry.

In order to maintain active operation of Spiritual gift, Paul commanded Timothy not to neglect Spiritual gifts instead to fan them into flame (1 Timothy 4:14). Roy Zuck notes the following ways gift of teaching could be developed:

- a) Exercising or using the gift by teaching others.
- b) Observing others who are effective teachers.
- c) Reading good books on teaching.
- d) Availing for training in the discipline and practice of teaching.
- e) Allow others to evaluate your teaching and give helpful comments afterward.
- f) Attend Christian education conferences and workshops.⁶²

The Holy Spirit is responsible for developing an active relation between the teacher and pupils that helps to fulfill the objective of Christian education. The Holy Spirit prompts love for the students. The love for God is ushered unto loving people. Along the knowledge to be taught the word and to communicate it effectively is the implanting of the love in the heart of the

61. James I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1984), 83.

62. Roy Zuck, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Christian Teaching," in *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Teaching*, ed. Kenneth O. Gangel and Howard G. Hendricks (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 39, 40.

teacher for the pupils by the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 lists nine characteristics of a spirit-filled life. The list begins with love. Love is defined as a selfless, self-sacrificing, other oriented concern, an attitude of genuine interest in the well-being of others. The student knows if the teacher genuinely concerned for and interested in them.

The compassion of Jesus sparked or produces learners' motivation. Everybody including children are all drawn to one who genuinely loves them.⁶³ The Holy Spirit also does help the teacher with his teaching methodology. Methods are simplified ways of teaching, ways to link content with experience. It is the means by which the pupils are brought into experience with God's word and Christ.⁶⁴ The teacher working in consonant of the Holy Spirit pursuit of effective ministry execution does not only seek the use of best educational techniques and tools available, study the word, seek to interpret it properly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, further designs the teaching time to enable teaching in the most effective manner.⁶⁵ Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, educational methods can work harmoniously under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit to enhance the teaching and learning process. With the teacher's conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit in prayer and his inclination to be creative and effective in teaching is guided by the Holy Spirit in the use of appropriate techniques.⁶⁶

Being receptive to the work of the Holy Spirit in understanding and applying God's Word contributes to genuine learning. A prayerful attitude, an open and obedient heart, and a yielded spirit ready to appropriate biblical content are essential if students are to become learners suitable

63. Howard G. Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987), 107-8.

64. Zuck, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Christian Teaching," 41.

65. Zuck, "The Role of the Spirit in Christian Teaching," 41, 42.

66. Zuck, "The Role of the Spirit in Christian Teaching," 41.

or conducive environment that seek to support the spiritual goal is also crucial for spiritual learning to take place.⁶⁷

The Church and the Future

The term, *church* derives from the Greek word, *kuriakos* means belong to the Lord; and the other '*ekklesia*, denoting an assembly. This takes the general usage of the term as found in the Old Testament and also applied in the LXX to denote the word congregation. Apart of Christ's usage of the term in Matthew 16:18 and Matthew 18:17 this term is not found used until the saving work of Christ has been completed. This paucity could likely explain the fact that these verses did appear to envisage a situation that belong to the future. The term appears to be frequently used after the atoning work of Christ has been completed and the church has had its birth at Pentecost. The term could now be seen regularly used to describe local group of Christians (Acts 5:11; 13:1; 18:22) and for all believers in the universal fellowship of Christ. This twofold usage is seen in Paul's writings (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1). The concept of the church embracing all believers is further advanced by Paul (1 Corinthians 10:32; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:15).

The church is not primarily a human structure like a political, social or economic organism. It is basically the church of Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18) or of the living God (1 Timothy 3:15). Among many other various descriptions that emphasizes that the church is not primarily a human structure, it is the body of Christ, with Him as the head of the whole body, and all believers in Him as the members (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12f; Ephesians 4:4; 12:12f). The church is a community of individuals who have experienced regeneration through faith in Jesus Christ as their savior and have made an open confession of him (Romans 10:9-10).

67. Zuck, "The Role of the Spirit in Christian Teaching, 41.

Amidst the diversity of the church's membership, it maintains the universality of outreach with its identity and relevance in every age and place. It rests on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets (Ephesians 2:20), being raised up as the first authoritative witnesses (Acts 1:8) having their testimony basic and through their teaching it is called, instructed and directed.

The church as an abiding living organism draws its life from Christ by the Holy Spirit through the word of which it is begotten (James 1:18), by which it is nourished and sanctified (Ephesians 5:26; 1 Peter 2:2). It receives its life and function from the Word in order to pass it on, that others might be quickened and sanctified. It exists to preach the gospel (Mark 16:15), to take up the responsibility of reconciling fallen man unto God (1 Corinthians 4:1; 5:19). It is also worth noting that the church's work is not limited merely to the salvation of man but to give the praise and glory to God (Ephesians 1:6; 2:7). In this regard, neither does the church nor its functions end with its earthly ministry. Though the church is triumphant in all its reality, its destiny, however, is to be brought into full conformity with the Lord (1 John 3:2) with all the saints. In this direction the church moves hesitantly yet expectantly with confidence in its future glory when it receives its full glory as the bride and body of Christ. Until then the church is meant to continue "steadfastly in the apostles' doctrines and fellowship" (Acts 2:42).

All of the missionary efforts of the church and all the efforts Christian theology should have their focus on this inevitable goal to which history of the world moves; a time when the blood-washed bride of Christ will be presented faultless before the presence of His glory in victory with much joy (Jude 24). Victory shall be ensured by the descent of the Son of Man from heaven in clouds of splendor. Coleman notes, "This hope puts a spring in the step and a song in the heart."⁶⁸ No matter what comes one's way, he should not be distracted but know that the

68. Coleman, "Theology of Evangelism," 98.

Lord is working through every circumstance to accomplish His purpose when the Christian victory would be consummated with the coming of the King of Kings, Lord of Lords!

It is in the Bible; the Word of God the Christian discovers his/her heritage and at the same time gets his/her source of hope of the future. It reveals the great teaching tradition of the parents, the priests, the wise men, the prophets, temples and synagogues, effectively used by the Israelites to perpetuate their faith and ways of life. Jesus, the Master teacher and his disciples spread the gospel message through preaching and teaching. It is only Biblical principles of education that challenges to perform the teaching mandate with commitment. Dr. Tim Beougher's caution is worth remembering, a low view of the bible dwindles and put to death the spirit of evangelism and mission.⁶⁹

69. Timothy Beougher, "The Personal Life of Effective Witness," in *Fulfilling the Great Commission in the 21st Century*, ed. Lyle W. Dorsett and Ajith Fernando (Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2015), 43.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of literature reflection paper is divided into four categories: The first focused on resourceful books on Evangelism, discipleship, and Christian education; aimed at finding strategic ways of carrying out the evangelistic mission of the church and at the same time investigate effective ways to teach the gospel message to preteens. The second sought to explore books on the early Christian Mission in Sierra Leone. The third, focused on helpful books on Christian school management. And the fourth, dealt with informative and helpful materials for reaching Muslim pupils for Christ.

Children are God's special people for who is the Kingdom of God. This makes it not only rightful but to have the church's evangelism program begin with the child, seeking to provide them with the opportunity to grow up in an environment where they can be taught the gospel and accept the way of Christ and grow in Him. With this, it could be counted a privilege to have a Christian heritage, where the child is exposed to the teachings of Christ early. Those without Christian heritage could be considered as less privileged and should deserve the foremost attention of the children's evangelistic mission of the church.

In his book, *All about Children*, written as a result of a lifelong work among children, Rev. John Inchley, formerly of Scripture Union agrees with Hallesby, "No one is so poor as he for whom not a single soul is praying, he who has no one to take him personally and persistently to God in prayer."¹ Among the less privileged, the Muslim child stands to be one of those that warrant the Church's top - most concern. Though Islam is devoid of an assurance of salvation, yet it aggressively claims to have a superior practice of faith that denies and rejects Jesus Christ's

1. John Inchley, *All About Children* (London: Coverdale House Publishers, 1976), 63.

atoning sacrifice. The Christian School offers freedom and spiritual development for these children locked up in the grip of the Muslim homes. The staff/teachers serve as substitute spiritual parents. They teach the gospel in words and deeds to their pupils. This paper seeks to minister the gospel to Zion Ministries School preteens, the majority of who are from Muslim homes.

The Evangelistic Target

Tuvya Zaretsky, a career missionary with *Jews for Jesus* during his 23rd year of service writes on the importance of having a target in the church's evangelistic pursuit. He defines focus evangelism as taking a specific people and their culture seriously.² Noting that reliance on 'generic' or unfocused evangelism tends to ignore people's differences whereas focus evangelism shows respect for individual people and groups. In the context of mission, he defines a target people to mean a specific class of people one is attempting to reach with an evangelistic message.³

It is needful that evangelistic pursuit of the church should be targeted. It does give a clear-cut reason or reasons for the choice. Justification of targeting the children could be found in the fact that the population of Children is the highest among other categories of people. In addition, children are in their formative years which make them to be strategically positioned to become a priority in the church's evangelistic and discipleship ministry.

A further reason for targeting children in evangelistic effort of the church could be that children do form the largest and most disadvantageous segment of the entire human race. This

2. Tuvya Zaretsky, "Target Evangelism: Ready, Aim, Witness!" *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (July 1997): 284.

3. Zaretsky, "Target Evangelism," 284.

age group is noted to be “One in three people alive in under the age of 15. It is estimated that over 80 percent of the world’s young people, 1.4 billion are growing up in non-Christian settings.”⁴ Stan Guthrie sees the children as the biggest Mission field and is in crisis.⁵ Woods and Levinson in agreement give staggering and a horrifying statistic on children of today referring to them as “silent’ emergency “and as ‘endangered children’ the world is losing.”⁶ Based on this, they make the clarion call, “It is time for Christians everywhere to start a grassroots movement on behalf of the world’s endangered children. Everyone must get in on it! Each one of us, with one strong, loud voice we must proclaim, IT’S FOR CHILDREN EVERYWHERE!”⁷ The writer is of the opinion that until the church comes back to making the children’s ministry the primary point of engagement in fulfilling its evangelistic mandate, viable and lasting success could not be guaranteed.

The Preteen Children

General Characteristics and Interest

Robert Joseph Choun and Janet Blomberg share a common view on the Preteens unique characters and interests that give them vantage position in the fulfillment of the evangelistic mandate of the church.⁸ Preteens are observed to be among category of young people being

4. Jennie Woods and Sandra Levinson, “It’s Time for Children Everywhere,” in *Children in Crisis: A New Commitment*, ed. Phyllis Kilbourn (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1996), 89.

5. Stan Guthrie, “Children at risk: The Biggest little mission field in the world?” *EMQ Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (January 1998): 88-94.

6. Woods and Levinson, “It’s Time for Children Everywhere,” 89, 90.

7. Woods and Levinson, “It’s Time for Children Everywhere,” 92.

8. Robert Joseph Choun, “Teaching Children,” in *The Christian Educator’s Handbook on Teaching: A Comprehensive Resource on the Distinctness of True Christian Teaching*, ed. Kenneth O. Gangel and Howard G. Hendricks (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988), 115-118; Janet Blomberg, “Understanding Your Child’s Development,” in *Fitted Pieces: A Guide for Parents Educating Children Overseas*, ed. Janet R. Blomberg and

introduced in a rapid changing values and new objects and are considered to be among the assaulted generation. As catalogued in the book, *Children in crisis: A New Commitment*, “Childhood in Crisis,”⁹ children are assaulted by contacts with Wars, Famine, Natural Disaster, Physical and Electronic Violence. They are also assaulted by a breakdown in social values and family norms resulting in dishonorable parents and confused children. They are assaulted by images in the airwaves relayed by men with predetermined mission of molding a positive response to things generally acknowledged as being unwholesome. Sometimes, they are also assaulted with unrealistic expectations of them by their parents or society or both.

Considering the preteens’ interest, they do generally exhibit growing interest for freedom. They yearn for independence and desire to escape being smothered by parents, especially if parents tend to be overprotective. They love making inquiries or asking questions.¹⁰ It is a period children enter wherein they become keen in expanding their knowledge. They seek to grow and therefore become inquirers. They therefore need special attention from a friendly coach that is accessible. They do not only need attention but do also need customized programming opportunities to ask questions and be challenged.

Furthermore, they do love having one they admire and make their hero of whom a dedicated and loving a teacher could be.¹¹ They need one that is dedicated serving their needs, spending time and listening to them and creating fun and joking with them. Such a teacher or mentor makes a difference in the preteen’s life. This age group makes room for possible

David F. Brooks (St. Clair Shores, MI: SHARE Education Services, 2001) 111, 118-119.

9. Phyllis Kilbourn, ed., *Children in Crisis: A New Commitment* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1996), 5-75.

10. Choun, “Teaching Children,” 116.

11. Choun, “Teaching Children,” 117.

acceptance of the gospel and leadership into Christian maturity. It means preteen ministry staff must be consistently being there for the kids. In this way he/she becomes their hero.

This age group shows great delight having fun moments and does become characteristic of their interest. Besides, the quest for consistence, leadership relationship and the gain of fundamental knowledge; they need plenty of fun moments, positive experiences. Most can find it difficult to remember or catch up with detail of a 10-15-minute message or the exact content of group discussions but cannot easily forget funny skits, songs, and life-changing experiences at camp meetings even after a long time. They remember what fun was for them. This age group is also able to participate in a wide variety of activities. Competitions and games are great ways they learn. They have excellent memory skills. They enjoy group interactions within a variety of ways such as: Talking, Group and club activities, Competitions, Joking and humor.¹² They enjoy expressing themselves through writing stories and letters and spending time on a phone or computer.

This age group is also interested having a personalized faith; at fifth and sixth grade they are seen interested in owning their own beliefs. Most comprehend repentance and some are ready to make a commitment to Christ.¹³ The following traits are common with them: Their conscience is becoming tender and can understand repentance. The insight gained about the general characteristics and interest of the preteens is very much resourceful in seeking for appropriate means to teach this category of children in a successful manner,

12. Choun, "Teaching Children," 117.

13. Robert J. Choun and Michael S. Lawson, *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Children's Ministry: Reaching the Next Generation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 64.

The Advantages of Targeting the Preteen Child in Evangelism

The child finds it pretty easy to make responsible commitment to God at the age of accountability. The issues of God's claim intelligently perceived by the child according to Dr. Coleman, comes the time the child should make responsible commitment to God; a decision that is hard for the proud person, who thinks he is master of his own life.¹⁴ Unlike the child, his childish faith makes it almost naturally easy to make such commitment. "This willful turning to the Lord may be called conversion – which is the climax of a process beginning with the first promptings of the gospel."¹⁵

It is advantageous to have the child learn the gospel when he is yet a child as later years. During his early years, the child's heart is tender and sensitive toward the spirit of God. As rightly maintained by Dr. Coleman, at this time they need to make their choice for Christ before the pattern of independency and deeper indoctrination and hardness against the Spirit of God is formed.¹⁶ Inchley refers to this childhood period the time the child fully become responsible for the sin of their own will.¹⁷ Inchley further maintain, in agreement with Dr Griffith Thomas, all children are included in the great atoning sacrifice and belong to Jesus Christ until by their own will deliberately reject or refuse Jesus.¹⁸ This childhood category is commonly referred to as the age of accountability. The writer is of the opinion that this period could likened to as being "of age." (John 9:21). This age group is generally observed as the moment of deliberate and conscious response for children brought up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. It is

14. Robert Coleman, *The Master's Way of Personal Evangelism* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1997), 109.

15. Coleman, *The Master's Way of Personal Evangelism*, 109.

16. Coleman, *The Master's Way of Personal Evangelism*, 109.

17. Inchley, *All About Children*, 130.

18. Inchley, *All About Children*, 130.

most likely somewhere between the age of seven and eleven the child comes to making conscious decisions. Being that children are unpredictable and different from each other it cannot be pinpointed when a child gets to the actual age of accountability.

These are the golden years of childhood; the habit-forming years when memory and discovery are active. Opportunities for teaching and training among others are tremendous. As rightly noted, in his vulnerable period the mind, will, emotion- indeed the whole personality of the child – must be regarded as a sacred trust by those who have the opportunity to influence the young life.”¹⁹ “Any evangelistic effort that has to bypass them [children] is put under a great disadvantage.”²⁰

The Muslim Pupils

There is general agreement among writers that any Christian choosing to influence Muslims needs to know them; have some working knowledge about Islam and its culture. To William Miller, getting acquainted with Muslims and with Islam is seen as the number one factor in reaching the Muslims.²¹ Seeking to reach the Muslim pupil, it is but prudent to somehow acquaint oneself with the home the child is being raised in order to have an understanding of the Muslim child for an appropriate evangelistic response. The following are some major areas that could make resourceful contribution to the understanding of the Muslim child: Firstly, is the motivation to reach the Muslims with the gospel. Secondly is the knowledge of what the Muslim kids are being taught or made to believe in their childhood. Thirdly is to identify some of the major misconceptions or misrepresentations held by Muslims about the Christian faith. And

19. Inchley, *All About Children*, 134.

20. Coleman, *The Master's Way of Personal Evangelism*, 110.

21. William Miller, *A Christian's Response to Islam* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1976), 131.

fourthly is to seek for some possible current windows of opportunities that do exist for reaching the Muslim child stand to be helpful.

Why Bother Reaching Muslims?

The writer's motivation for Muslim evangelism aligns with the confession and commitment of David W. Shenk's assertion, a mission board director and charities in Somalia:

As people of the Book, I stand upon that which God has revealed in the Biblical Scriptures – believe in one God only, the creator and sustainer of the universe, believe in his great love for all people, therefore He reaches out inviting people to repent of their sinfulness and become his covenant people. In this regard, I confess that Jesus is the Messiah, one in whom God has fully and definitely revealed himself, the only Lord and sustainer of humanity, appreciate and rejoice in the 'presence of the Holy Spirit of God, who is working throughout the world, seeking and calling people to righteousness and to the knowledge of God, who is revealed in the Messiah – the Way the Truth and the Life.' This fact compels to be present, to witness, to serve, to invite, to pray, to wait in anticipation that all Muslim people will have the opportunity to discover Jesus, the Messiah's forgiveness of sin and the fruit of salvation, both now and eternally." It is the expectation that all those who believe will become members of the redeemed communities which is believed to be in the perfect will of God.²²

God's love does warrant the care for the Muslims. The Muslims like any other included in the Great Commission are the object of God's love. Christ died for all men in order to gain salvation. In order to realize the demonstration of God's love in the life of every Muslim it must first find its expression in the life of the Christian (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). The Lord's command holds that the gospel should be proclaimed to everyone and in every place, including places opposed to the message. "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18, NIV). God has provided abundant power to have everyone who believes in Jesus Christ to be saved (Romans 1:16). Islam ignores and substitutes God's only means of salvation in Christ with that of a false

22. David W. Shenk, "Conversations Along the Way," in *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry (Monrovia, CA: World Vision Resources, 1989), 1-2.

sense of security through works of self- righteousness. It is the keen desire of God to see His children saved and come into growing relationship with Him.

Also, the alarming rise of Islam and its claims of superiority do make it a major concern. Islam is the only world religion that has come into being since the advent of Christianity that has engulfed over 720 million people, one-seventh of the world's population.²³ More recent global data puts the Muslim population at 1.8 billion, 24% of the world's population.²⁴ Advancing at a tremendous rate, Islam appears to gather convert in far greater number than does Christianity.

Norman and Abdul putting the figure higher, express the concern that Islam has become the second largest religion in the world, claiming over one billion adherents—presently making a ratio of one out of every five persons on earth.²⁵ There are more Muslims in the United States than Methodists.²⁶ Besides the swift rise of the Muslim population, it is a concern that Islam claims to be the true religion for mankind and do affirms Muhammad as “the seal of the prophets,” the last and greater than all those who have existed before him including Jesus.²⁷

Islam's resurgence in our Generation becomes another concern. The initial rise of Islam, according to Malek is found in Islam's fulfillment of national expectations, its having a gifted founder, its adaptation of its message to its audience, its devoted followers, its use of power, its concern for the social and spiritual needs of its followers, its favorable laws, its visible focal point of entering the faith, the zeal of its followers, its lure of gifts and the favorable world

23. Don M. McCurry, “A Time for New Beginnings,” in *The Gospel and Islam: A Compendium*, ed. Don M. McCurry (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979), 13.

24. Michael Lipka, “Muslims and Islam: Key Findings in the U.S. and Around the World,” August 9, 2017, accessed November 17, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/09/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/>.

25. Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 11.

26. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 11.

27. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 11.

condition as major factors for the spread of Islam in the past.²⁸ Norman Geisler and Abdul and Malek take cognizance of the resurgence of Islam in seizing up new realms in our world over the last two decades is caused by the heavy financial sponsorship from Islamic states to aid the spread Muslim missions round the globe; and at the same time luring none-Muslim to convert to Islam.²⁹

A. AbDat-Isa dwelling on the pattern of Islamization of Africa and Asia adds business and trade; intermarriages, immigration and Migrations; attempts to gain political power, establishment of Islamic state and the attempts to implement Shari'a and the opening of Islamic schools as measures being employed that are aiding the spread of Islam.³⁰ In Egypt for instance Muslim missionaries promise a wife, a job, exemption from military service and receive gift of money. In the rest of Africa inducement of food is used to convert to Islam.

The grip Islam has over its people makes reaching the Muslim with the gospel a big challenge. The apparent projection of Islam as a big brotherhood, one without racial and social biasness appears to be another means it lure converts with an aim of making a one world state under the banner of Islam.³¹ This drive has been frustrated in nightmare by bickering hatred, misunderstandings factions, wars and bloodshed that continue to fragment the brothers of Umma.³²

The claim of the superior moral standard of Islam is also challenging. In addition to the allurements of gifts, the apparent drive for one big brotherhood role, Muslims claim to have

28. Sobhi Malek. *Islam: Introduction and Approach*, 2nd ed. (Irving, TX: ICI University Press, 1996), 59.

29. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 11; Malek, *Islam*, 67-69.

30. A. AbDat-Isa, "Islam's Agenda in North America: Patterns of Islamization," in *The Gospel for Islam Reaching Muslims in North America*, ed. Roy Oksnevad Welliver (Wheaton: Billy Graham Center 2001), 26-30.

31. Malek, *Islam*, 68.

32. Malek, *Islam*, 68.

superior moral standard that that portrayed by the West. This claim according to Malek, appears to be a mirage.³³ Since the fall of Adam and Eve, mankind all over the world stands to be corrupted.

Muslims in claiming superiority see Western moral standards being corrupt and are being exported to the other parts of the world. They condemned the West for loose behavior of women, sexual immorality, unwholesome movies, drunkenness and homosexuality. The truth is that these are characteristic of the depraved man everywhere, including the Islamic states. Islamic writings have revealed even Caliphs been found guilty of drunkenness, sodomy, and other vices. The truth remains, both Islamic and non-Islamic cultures are all guilty and do need the saving grace of the Lord Jesus.

It is challenging that Muslims are generally at edge with Christians. Islam's intolerance of other religions and more especially Christianity and its practices do call for concern. The following quote states how Muslims were commanded to be hostile to Christians: "Ye who believe! Take not the Jews and Christians for your friends and protectors."³⁴ Tolerating Christians, accepting their help, and more still, granting them the right to worship according to their religion is considered breaching Islamic law. In most cases a non-reconciliatory spirit of suspicion and distrust exist in the heart of the Muslim for the Christian. This often causes minor incidents that can fan their animosity against the non-Muslim into flames of open persecution.

There are also challenges that are noted from the angle of Christians, ones that could be termed as barriers to Muslim evangelism. Misunderstanding Muslim history and culture, wrong missionary approach, importation of foreign culture and failing to give appropriate scriptural emphasis of the theology of the world of the spirit have acted a deterrent to the evangelization of

33. Malek, *Islam*, 68-69.

34. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 58.

Muslims. Wilbur J. O'Donovan, a missionary and a lecturer in West and East Africa for over 30 years, in his book, *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective*, one that seeks to relate biblical Christianity to the African context; does help to resolve questions on Theology, Bibliology, Christology, Soteriology, Pneumatology etc.³⁵ How could the African live in relation to the spirit world.

Discussing the African religion from the Biblical Christian perspective, O'Donovan does not only see the non-Christian religions, including Islam emerging from superstitions, deception and ignorance but actually sees them having a demonic root.³⁶ He agrees with the fact that it is the truth that dispels superstitions and deceptions in the same way light drives darkness (John 8:12). Along this line the Lord Jesus commissioned Paul to preach to the gentiles, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me"(Acts 26:18). As noted by O'Donovan, the wrong ideas about God have actively persuaded the minds, through the deceptions and lies perpetuated by Satan and his demons. Although the church appears to be rapidly growing in Africa, including Sierra Leone, there is much concern about the degree of conversion that occurs in the lives that are turning up to become Christians. A large number of these practice syncretism wherein they hold on some of their animistic beliefs and at the same time tend to follow Christ. The understanding brought by the above stated concerns which are sources of the motivations for Muslim evangelism give some useful understanding about the nature, and reasons for the rise of the Islam.

35. Wilbur O'Donovan Jr., *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective* (Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1995), 2.

36. O'Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African perspective*, 192.

What The Muslim Child Is Taught During His or Her Childhood

Islam popularly known as a homogenous and a monolithic practicing religious faith reveals an additional practice of their dogmatic belief in their doctrines and the lining up to pray in the mosque five times a day do stand to have a huge private life within the home setting, not known to the public, which the child growing in that home is aware of and becomes part of his or her education as he grows up in that type of Muslim home. Phil Parshall reveals that there exists tension in Islam as with other religions in which on the one hand there is orthodoxy with rigid code of ritual and laws and that of the practices of folk Islam.³⁷ The Muslim religious school, referred to as *Madrasas* that prepare leaders that are meticulously committed to keeping the teachings of the Qur'an and its traditions.³⁸ These teachers like the Pharisees in the Bible in their desire to legalistically preserve the teaching become deeply offended by any Islamic practice that does not quite align itself with the Qur'an. It is noted that about 70 percent of all Muslims in the world are influenced by what could be termed as folk Islam or popular Islam which the orthodox Muslim community of Muslim considers aberrant.³⁹ To better understand this hidden face of Islam, Parshall, summarizing what folk Islam really is, quotes Bill Musk:

Popular Islam has added a whole life-way to animistic beliefs and practices. The use of rosary for divining and healing, the use of amulets and talismans, the use of hair-cuttings and nail-trimmings, the belief and practice of saint-worship, the use of charms, knots, magic, sorcery, the exorcism of demons, the practice of tree and stone worship, cursing and blessing – these and many other animistic practices belie the gap between the theological religion and the actual religion.⁴⁰

37. Phil Parshall, *Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspectives on Folk Islam* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 15, 16.

38. Parshall, *Bridges to Islam*, 15,16.

39. Parshall, *Bridges to Islam*, 15,16.

40. Parshall, *Bridges to Islam*, 15,16.

Malek, quoting Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer and Dr. Donald A. McGavran agrees and makes the following succinct revelation of Folk Islam:

An in-depth study of Muslim belief reveals that there is another world of Islam behind the façade of the Qur'an, the Hadith, the Sunna, and the imam's sermons at the mosque. Samuel M. Zwemer succinctly states: 'The student of Islam will never understand the common people unless he knows the curious beliefs and half-heathen practices' (1920.8). Donald A. McGavran voices the same wisdom when he says, the witness to Christ must have a knowledge of the other man's actual religion, not 'according to the book.' But to the 'haphazard bundle' of what is actually believed and practiced.⁴¹

A holistic picture of Islam should reflect not only by the practice of the five pillars but by what also obtains in the privacy of the Muslim home. It appears all that is known about Islam is portrayed in the observance of the five pillars of Islam without much understanding of what goes on in the privacy of the Muslim home. These animistic tendencies among the Muslim could be rightly defined as the syncretization of very basic and inadequate knowledge of Islam with a fear and worship of the unseen spiritual and naturalist forces of the cosmos.⁴² They seek to respond to felt needs.⁴³

Muslim leaders are believed not only custodians of the Qur'an but carriers of power – mystical. Among animistic Muslims, it is believed Muslim religious leaders (*Sheikhs*) are not only custodians of the Qur'an but carriers and possessors of its power. Therefore, contact with these kinds of Muslim leaders is believed to secure blessing. During the horrible Ebola episode in Sierra Leone an Imam of Popular Islam who was recognized in his village and the surrounding villages as an anointed man got infested with Ebola and died. Muslims folks of the same animistic set, against imposed health restrictions by the Government at that time, went ahead to wash the corpse of the deceased Imam, collected the water used to bath the body of the deceased

41. Malek, *Islam*, 115, 116.

42. Parshall, *Bridges to Islam*, 76.

43. Parshall, *Bridges to Islam*, 15, 16.

to wash themselves with in order to have a transference of the dead Imam's anointing.

Consequently, the whole village, Kalia by name became infested and got over two-third of its inhabitants dead because of the infested water they bathed with.

As noted by Phil Parshall, animistic practices are remnant of the idolatrous practices that existed before the conception and establishment of Islam.⁴⁴ These pagan and heretical practices persisted on the ground that the earlier Muslim missionaries were at least mystically influenced. Instead of strictly holding to the letter of the Islamic faith or law, they were rather in favor of accommodating and compromising their beliefs or faith.⁴⁵ This was appealing to the converts wherein they could retain much of their old and simple practices of what seemed good and helpful to them. As a result, cultural and religious tensions or conflict was minimized.⁴⁶ As it is with other animistic practices, this makes attraction for Islam especially with the rural and illiterate communities.

As it is common with man everywhere, these have even been the desire to have communion with divine, in order to feel lifted up from the temporal to the spiritual. Without an exempt, Christianity too has had its outstanding mystical practices. The basis of such is not just built on the desire for divine communion but to a large extent aided by illiteracy where in the use of the intellect does not count much. This quest draws toward the use of tangible objects for worship and also opens to fatalistic tendencies. The additional understanding of the private practice of Muslim as it is obtained in the home where the child grows as noted by Malek, gives

44. Parshall, *Bridges to Islam*, 72.

45. Parshall, *Bridges to Islam*, 15, 16.

46. Parshall, *Bridges to Islam*, 15, 16.

the revelation of the spiritual hunger that is found in Islam that could only be full addressed by Christ.⁴⁷

Two Misconceptions the Growing Child Learns About Christianity from Muslim Parents

The Muslim child during his growing years learns not only about the religious faith of the parents but is being taught misconceptions emanating largely from misinformation, partial knowledge of the truth or malice targeted at discrediting the Christian faith. Geisler and Saleeb state earlier encounters between Muslims and Christians had been cordial in Mecca, messages from Muhammad appeared positive about the Jews and the Christians until when he (Muhammad) was rejected by the majority of the Jews and Christians terming him as an imposter which brought a dramatic change of attitude toward these two groups.⁴⁸ This change in attitude and treatment of the Jews and Christians is found documented in the later verses of the Qur'an from which Jihad had emerged⁴⁹ The following reveals Muhammad change of disposition towards the People of the Books after his rejection in Mecca, "O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors to each other" (5:54).⁵⁰

The Charge of Corrupted Scripture

Prior to this divide, there had been cordial relationship between the Muslims and the Jews and Christians, they saw the Jews and Christians as believers in the one God, in the "last day" and in the work of righteousness and as people who are entitled to God's reward; such

47. Malek, *Islam*, 122.

48. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 58.

49. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 58-59.

50. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 59.

people, the followers of Muhammad should not fear (2:62).⁵¹ And it is further disclosed in sura 29:46, the followers should not dispute with the People of the Books, regarding them as common believers.⁵² Muslims respect the Bible in its form with special attention to the Psalms (*Zabur*), the Prophets (*Taurat*) the gospel (*Injil*).⁵³ Muhammad and his community of faith levied accusation that the Jews and the Christians breached their covenant with God rendering the older communities of faith to be replaced by a new community of faith, the Ummat.⁵⁴

The Muslims accused the Christians of having corrupted scripture; one that has been changed and has forgery in its textual divine revelation, one with doctrinal mistakes in it, citing the incarnation of Christ, the Trinity of the Godhead and the doctrine of original sin as examples. They further maintain that there are erroneous religious practices such as the sacraments, use of images, and other church observances.⁵⁵ Muslim theologians like Ajijola have gone as far as rejecting the *tawrat*, the *Zbur*(the Psalms of David), and the *injl*(Gospel).⁵⁶ Because of Muslim belief that the scripture has been tampered with claim the Qur'an as the noblest of the books and the last of God-given scriptures to come down and it abrogates all the books that ever preceded it and it is impossible for it to be corrupted.⁵⁷

51. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 59.

52. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 59.

53. Badru D, Kateregga and David W. Shenk, *Islam and Christianity in Dialogue* (Nairobi: Uzima Press Limited, 1980), 32.

54. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 59.

55. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 61, 62.

56. Alhaj A. D. Ajijola, *The Essence of Faith in Islam* (Lahore, Pakistan: Islamic Publications, 1978), 79.

57. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 61-62.

Repudiate The Deity and The Atoning Work of Jesus Christ

Jesus is recognized as a great Hebrew prophet, and he is mentioned 97 times in the Qur'an of which he is mentioned 93 times in 15 suras of the Qur'an.⁵⁸ It is intriguing to note the following honorary position and titles Qur'an gives to Jesus and yet deny his deity. It refers to him as "Messiah" eleven times, the word of God and the Spirit of God (4:169-71), the speech of truth (19:34-35), a sign unto men and mercy from God (19:21).⁵⁹ Even though held in high esteem Muslims entirely deny His deity or strip Him of deity. They do not believe that He is a superior prophet. They hold Muhammad to be superior. Aiding their claim, they falsely erroneously hold that Jesus himself foretold the coming of Muhammad and described him the seal of the prophets.⁶⁰

The Qur'an affirms the virgin birth, His miraculous acts and his ascension; but strongly opposed to Jesus been the Son of God and does speak against it. They are pruned to understand it literally. Some argue if Jesus should be esteemed for his unique entrance into the world then Adam should be greater for not having any human association.⁶¹ Some do also argue against the sinlessness of Jesus. The mission of Christ is seen to be limited, and do not agree with the Christian doctrine of atonement.

Muslims see the mission of Jesus to be limited in scope. It is maintained that it was limited to the nation of Israel and that his revelation was basically that of confirmation and review of the Mosaic covenant as recorded in Sura 5:46-47.⁶² Yusuf Ali for example in his

58. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 63.

59. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 63.

60. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 64.

61. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 64.

62. Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 65.

commentary on the Holy Qur'an maintains this thought.⁶³ To the orthodox Muslim it is Muhammad as the seal of the prophets who they believe belong to all times and places.

Besides the disagreement Muslim fundamentalists and Christians have over the person and work of Jesus Christ, there is the ancient debate on the Qur'an's denial of the crucifixion of Jesus. Geisler and Saleeb commenting on the argument between Muslims and Christians of the differing views on the crucifixion cites Yusuf Alie's commentary on the highly controversial text, 4:157-59 which serves as the foundation for the argument. Commenting on the above passage, Yusuf Alie writes,

The end of the life of Jesus on earth is as much involving in mystery as his birth.... The orthodox Christian church makes it a cardinal point of their doctrine that his life was taken on the cross, that he died and was buried, and that on the third day he rose in the body... the Quranic teachings is that Christ was not crucified nor killed by the Jews, notwithstanding certain apparent circumstances which produced that illusion in the minds of some of his enemies; that disputations, doubts and conjectures on such matters are vain; and that he was taken up to God.⁶⁴

Based on the phrase in the above stated controversial text, "it was made to appear to them," the orthodox Muslim has interpreted that to mean that Jesus was not crucified rather God substituted him with another who looked like Jesus to be crucified and not Jesus. Besides, the phrase, "God raised him up unto Himself," has been taken to mean, Jesus was taken up alive to heaven.

Concerning the person of Jesus, there seems to be generally a common agreement between the Qur'an and the Old Testament on the views of prophets with one major exception of the Muslims teaching claiming prophets to be sinless. There little substantial correspondence between the Qur'an and the New Testament view on the person of Christ. The Qur'an sees Jesus

63. A. Yusuf. Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary* (Damascus: Ouloom, AlQur'an, 1934).

64. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 66.

Christ as mere human being chosen by God as a prophet and sent for the guidance of his people. The Qur'an however portrays him as a unique prophet.

In the light of the virgin birth which is acknowledged by the Islam everything about Jesus becomes a matter of delightful contemplation to the whole human race.⁶⁵ The insight on the above misrepresentations and misinformation is helpful as these understanding helps to give appropriate answers and scriptural responses geared toward the deliverance of the Muslim pupil or audience.

Two Major Windows of Opportunity in Reaching Out with The Gospel

The Windows of Individual Felt Needs

There is a revelation of need within the lives of the Muslims. It is apparent that behind the call to rigid and the meticulous commitment to the keeping of the Qur'an and the Hadith that launches attack at basic tenets of the Christian faith there is a huge vacuum of spiritual need longing for satisfaction. This is better expressed by Parshall:

As millions of Muslims move beyond cold, dead orthodoxy, we see them desiring that felt needs be met. Their hearts cry out for fulfillment in a love relationship to a more personal God. This shift from firmly established guidelines of faith and practice has created serious anomalies. Yet we must understand why the Muslim world over are in quest of a reality beyond cognitive data. Has there developed a spiritual relationship to God through Jesus Christ? Is the longing for love – both to God and to man – not a primary biblical teaching? What about the fear that grips a Muslim household and causes people to engage in animistic practices to ward off evil spirits? Is not Christ the path to release from fear? Did not Jesus say, "Peace I give unto you"? Many Muslims are totally frustrated in their attempts to gain salvation through an interminable system of laws and rituals. Cannot grace point to a better way? Islam gives no assurance of eternal life to its followers. How much better is the comfort of 1 John 5:13, which assures us that we can know we have obtained eternal salvation from sin through Christ.⁶⁶

65. Jabez Burns, *Cyclopedia of Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1951), 474.

66. Parshall, *Bridges to Islam*, 18.

Dysfunctional home environment of the Muslim child such as the rigid restriction of individual freedom and decision does often time keep most of the growing ups under pressure, making them somehow long for their individual rights and freedom. Besides, the girl-child regarded in Islam as inferior to the male exposes her to the damaging feeling of low esteem which makes the woman to long for a healthy and wholesome life.

Moreover, individual rights subject to family and communal approval could serve as window that reveals the needs for the gospel could satisfy. Muslim child is affected by the loss of personal and individual rights or values gets relief as he or she looks forward to a time of living his or her own life away from parents and former community members. Multiple wives and the negative and lasting negative impact of rivalry among wives and children of different mothers – animosity and fetish; partiality in the family; limited attention from father; and the harsh discipline pose negative effect urges or creates the desire within the child for a better option or way of life.

The Windows of Secularization and Advancement

Secular drive for progress in this age of modernization is causing Muslims to be separated from religions norms that they have been held by or familiar with. In addition, the advent of the advancement in technology brings a window of opportunity for Christian witness. Although Islam tends to resist the baggage it comes with, yet students use it for research purposes at least. Growing urbanization is weakening family ties among the Muslims.⁶⁷ Malek further adds that development and liberation need in the Muslim and the world in general,

67. Malek. *Islam*, 90.

signaling a window of opportunity for presenting the gospel.⁶⁸ Moreover the drive for material prosperity is causing less time with family and religious practices which the Christian family too suffers. As secularization and technology advances they continue weakening family and cultural ties there by offering wider opportunity for sharing the Christian message with Muslims.

Response to the above stated motivations for evangelizing the Muslim child, there could have been no reason to border reaching out to Muslims if Islam has been adequate in meeting the moral and the spiritual need of its people. As William Miller, one who served as a missionary to Iran for over 50 years and chairman of the Committee of Fellowship for Faith notes, converts to Christianity do testify to the inadequacy of Islam.⁶⁹ It is noted for its failure to diagnose man's fallen condition as a sinner, unable to know and subscribe to God's means of salvation. It fails to reveal God in his holiness and his love for the sinful man and without a clue as to how the sinful man could be save from sin and death. It knows nothing about assurance of forgiveness and having peace with God. It fails in knowing the Holy Spirit who teaches and gives guidance and at the same time sanctifies the believer. As Miller rightly points out, "It points men to a dead prophet and not to the Lord Jesus Christ, who Conquered death and is alive with us forever. Muslims need Jesus Christ just as do the idol-worshippers in Africa or the atheists in America."⁷⁰ The earlier Muslim children are snatched from the grip of Islam or at least be exposed to the assurance of salvation in the love of God in Jesus could serve as witness that could possibly lead to their future conversion.

68. Malek, *Islam*, 102.

69. Miller, *A Christian's Response to Islam*, 161.

70. Miller, *A Christian's Response to Islam*, 161.

The Evangelistic Instrument

A successful accomplishment of a task does largely depend on the type of instrument or tool used. Using an appropriate tool helps ease and ensures accomplishment of the task. The Christian school with an effective means of making the Word of God gain prominence becomes a strategic tool for the fulfillment of the Great Commission in a predominantly Muslim community where most of the pupils seek enrollment in a Christian School.

Christian School Ministry

A defining statement about the Christian school, one that stands to guide the direction and focus of the institution becomes foremost in the planning of a Christian school. Christian Education is the process of helping pupils acknowledge God and to conform to the image of Christ whilst the Christian school is a place designed to give Christian Education.⁷¹ Zion Ministries School exists with the objective of granting access and training to all regardless the creed or religious persuasion. Once found in this faith community, the pupil becomes either consciously or unconsciously exposed to the Christian influence of prayer and worship. With time the non-Christian pupil discovers whether consciously or not, the pupil is influenced towards the acceptance of the newfound faith expressed in the school.⁷² This approach aligns with the Celtic way of evangelism, unlike the Roman approach, the presentation of the message came first, followed by the invitation to decide for Christ and then become a member of the fellowship or the community of faith. Hunter elaborating on this, draws attention to Finny's citation of Professor Robbin Gill's general observation concerning most people, 'belonging comes before believing' for this reason, evangelism is now about 'helping people to belong so

71. James Deuink and Carl D Herbster, *Effective Christian School Management* (Greenville, SC: B. Jones University Press, 1986), 12.

72. George G. Hunter III, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity can reach the West ... again*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 55.

that they can believe.⁷³ Hunter's book, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism* is very much informative and impressive. Such belonging becomes an eye opener, yielding surprises as wrong notions are being discovered.

For instance, a Yemenis student who recently found himself on a two and half years' nursing program at a medical school with good number of committed Christian students including one of my church members in Ghana, getting to experience how Christians observe their personal and corporate devotion to prayers, coupled with their good moral life and how friendly they were, confessed, "We are being lied to. Back home we are told Christians don't pray, don't fast, they are alcohol drinkers, and they are not nice people. I will go back and tell them that it is all lies. I will not even prevent any of my children who would want to be a Christian in future." The Muslim child in a Christian school not only uncovers the lies and errors but offers the opportunity for having an objective faith.

The Christian school as a means of fulfilling the Great Commission calls for the overall purpose of that school to be found in teaching the word of God. A school that seeks to provide a comprehensive education for its pupils through an academic program of study in a context of a Christian world view. Central to such learning process is the integration of both faith and academics that offers salvation and encourages spiritual formation and growth shown by the development of a Christian mind and a godly character. It is of foremost concern that the administrator grasps the philosophy of the school. What its goals are, orient everyone involved, chart the course and directs the school towards the fulfillment of that goal.⁷⁴ With the sad decline of Christian mission schools, current acute shortage of Schools in the country to cope with the

73. Hunter, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism*, 55.

74. Roy W. Lowrie, Jr., *Administration of the Christian School* (Whitter, CA: Association of Christian Schools International, 1984), 12.

growing children education need, and the increasing materialistic preoccupation of parents that is grossly limiting parental contact with their children make the revival and the proliferation of the Christian schools in the country an absolute necessity if our country could be saved and developed. The Christian school is needed to serve not only as vital partner to Christian parents but to also become a substitute parent for children for kids from non-Christian homes who for one reason or more desire admission to Zion Ministries School. This school has the responsibility of teaching and training the child in such a way that it could lead to the subsequent spiritual formation of its pupils.

The Christian school has been a very effective tool in the fulfilment of the Great Commission in the past. Its past effectiveness was not only limited to making converts but producing people with integrity who gainfully served the nation. Serving a predominantly Muslim nation with Christian schools where over 50% of its pupils attending Christian schools come from non-Christian homes. The Christian school holds its pupils for about 7 hours from Monday to Friday every week yields a high result. It is therefore positioned for making the highest impact on their pupils. Their pupils hear, see and interact with the gospel through lives dedicated to discharging loving service to the Lord; and at the same time enabling them to gain the knowledge needed to daily live and to serve the Lord as willing learners. The school is well positioned to make positive impact on their pupils as they spend such long hours and years in the Christian school. Aldrich has well stated the importance of contact, “There is no impact without contact.”⁷⁵

The evangelistic strategy of employing Christian school yields tremendous dividends. In Sierra Leone and in many other African countries practically all the political leaders who led Africa from colonial rule to independence and the administrators and professionals who took

75. Joseph C. Aldrich, *Lifestyle Evangelism* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1981), 19.

over from the colonial administrators were products of mission schools and colleges.⁷⁶ From the 1700–1900 all Christian missions launched out from the West did not only plant churches but simultaneously opened schools where the children were taught Christian values. To stop or give less attention to Christian School could stand to be one of the greatest errors that could befall a nation. Except children grow up in an environment where they can receive godly instruction they tend to bow to the secular and ungodly influences around them. With the asset of the Christian school, it becomes a grave mistake to allow it to die or dwindle. Mission schools are not only fading out in structure and appearance, but a majority of the surviving ones has also lost the potency in fulfilling the Christian mandate. During the colonial era and the simultaneous return of the free slaves from the West, churches and schools were opened to Christianize and to give education opportunity. It is sad to note that just about twenty years after independence, the vision of Christian school suffered drastic declination and, in some places, phased out. Most of the existing Mission or Christian schools today only carry the adjective, “Christian” without any valuable Christian commitment.

Israel was commanded by God to impress and internalize the word by their children. No wonder, Timothy from childhood had learnt the word. The weekly church program of Christian tuition cannot be compared to seven days a week studying in a secular school. The word in Deuteronomy 6:7 “impress” means to point intensely, to articulate, or pierce. Furthermore, concerning the teaching of the child is the word “train” in Proverbs 22:6 where it is stated, “train the child in the way he should go.” Considering the use of these two words, to impress and to train brings to mind a process that calls for repetition, intensity, concentration, example and a considerable amount of time.

76. George Kinoti, *Hope for Africa and what the Christian can do* (Nairobi: AISRED, 1994), 51.

In this regard no matter the occasional training or teaching scheduled for a child's upbringing like Sunday school, camp meetings, or even family devotional meetings could not be compared with the long hours the child who attends a Christian school could have for his or her training. Today children that could have been benefiting from wholesome Christian school environment are found absorbing at least thirty-five hours a week in a secular school. If the Lord's words could be taken seriously "a student is not above his teacher," it would then stand to reason that everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. This makes it very important to consider well who should teach your child. Parents and equally teachers have lost the vision of what the ancient believed and valued.

Martin Luther, the name most commonly associated with the Reformation, held the education of the young as a priority; and used it as a primary means for spreading the gospel message. He is accredited with the following saying, "I am very much afraid that schools will prove to be the great gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the heart of youths. I advise no one place a child where the scripture do not reign paramount."⁷⁷

Christian schools stand to have the greatest influence on children. The need today for Christian schools is more than ever in helping to enforce Christian parental values or in helping to bring a child to the knowledge of Christ that which he/she misses in the home because of the lack of role model to follow. Besides, today work separate parents from their children and are left vulnerable. The exchange of work at home for work away from home for long hours diminishes parents influence on their children. As Steve Farrar states, parents, prior to the

77. Martin Luther, *What Luther Says: An Anthology*, ed. Ewald M. Plass (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 449.

industrial revolution had their lives built around the home.⁷⁸ Like in Old Testament times children were raised and served with their parents.

With the dawn of the industrial revolution things changed. Parents generally exchanged work at home for work away from home for long periods of time. Consequently, most parents stop raising their children, abandoning them to be taught by the world. No wonder the high level of child and youth delinquencies today. In such situation the Christian school stands out of making the greatest impact on kids as all children are sent to school where they spend 8 hours five to six days a week. Today, the Christian school is established as an arm of the home and usually of the church. It serves to reinforce the Biblical teachings of the home and the church; and for those outside Christian homes, it serves as a means of reaching and nurturing them for Christ.⁷⁹

Next to the home is the church institution, commissioned by God to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). Although the goal in the great commission is on discipleship, it does not exclude the fact that the person needs to be first be led to accept Christ as Savior before being becoming His disciple. Furthermore, it's reasonable to perceive that the command is directed first to reaching the unbeliever or unbelieving word by the phrase, "go ye into the world," second, the church is to baptize the converts and third, it has the responsibility of teaching these converts everything Christ commanded. Christians are therefore to seek winning the lost to Christ and then instruct that person regardless age or creed.⁸⁰

The Christian school helps the pupils to find Christ; besides, it helps to develop its pupils spiritually. There could be other reasons for a wishing admission, like wholesome environment,

78. Steve Farrar, "Fathers and Sons," *Enrichment* 8, no. 2 (Spring 2003):64-66.

79. Deuink and Herbster, *Effective Christian School Management*, 11.

80. Deuink and Herbster, *Effective Christian School Management*, 10-11.

proximity, affordable tuition cost, academic excellence, disposition of staff etc. Nonetheless, the school's main goal and objective remain geared toward forming the image of Christ in its kids through social interaction with the Christian environment and by the proclamation of Christ. After some time in the Christian school, this exposure has the possibility of bringing a pupil to the saving knowledge of Christ, affording that pupil to graduate as believers in Christ or at least as one that has gotten the exposure of hearing and perceiving the message of Christ that could be capable or become a contributory factor leading to the future salvation of that pupil. Christian Education makes wise unto Salvation and unto good works. Christian education has the purpose of making one wise unto salvation but also making perfect and thoroughly furnishing in doing that which is good (Ephesians 4:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:17). It is the goal of Christian education to help create in each person a Christlikeness.⁸¹

Teaching The Gospel Through Gospel Devotional

Despite the immense importance of the biblical purpose and practice of our Christian education endeavor portrayed by the Christian school, without the communication of organized scripturally based gospel message, it falls short in fulfilling its mission. This is observed to be the major factor that rendered Mission schools that were once effective in fulfilling the Great Commission in the past to be no longer effective. The Word of God in the Christian School

In order to have the Christian school bring the highest honor, its administration should put the Word of God in its rightful place. The Word of God must be central in the school's life. The staff or the faculty should not only be trained and qualified but know the scriptures well and have the ability to apply biblical truth in the lives of their students, in this way they make biblical

81. Deuink and Herbster, *Effective Christian School Management*, 10.

truth relevant to the pupils.⁸² The faculty as well as the pupils must be engaged with the word in devotion to Christ. The school's day must begin with general devotion at assembly time to which all pupils and at least every fulltime staff member should be present.

Zion Ministries School has forty-five minutes general school devotion once a week. The administrator also sees the need of having at least a 20 minutes' corporate administrative and faculty devotional time at least once a week. This must be a requirement for staff and must not be optional. No staff is hired if he or she does not willingly come for faculty devotions. There should be such spiritual cohesion and unity in purpose and service in the school. The pupils, in addition to the school day's devotion, are also exposed to several moments of interacting with the word. The Word of God should be central in all the faculty, student and parent services.

There should be a genuine integration of the Word of God with all of the teaching in the classroom and with all the activities the school undertakes. The administrator is expected to be in the forefront in exerting or exhibiting the importance of the Word of God in the life of the school.⁸³ Zion Ministries Elementary School although it has had some success in getting some of its pupils to confess Christ and some joining their friends to attend church services and other Christian programs, the need still exist to maximize its teaching effort through gospel devotional and to evaluate itself for a more fruitful service.

What Is Gospel Devotional?

Gospel devotional is a planned and guided scripture base instructions, book or virtual apps that help the target group to understand the Word of God that could lead him or her to know

82. James D. Berkley, ed., *Leadership Handbooks of Practical Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 390.

83. Lowrie, *Administration of the Christian School*, 297-309.

the love of God and to grow in His love. The teaching ministry is clearly and forcefully seen in the scriptures. Its purpose, the method, and the result are spelled out in the scriptures. Jesus' purpose is revealed in His declaration, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Teaching the word was meant to be the method of fulfillment. All who would hear and heed to the instructions find the "abundant life" of which Jesus spoke.

David as well stated the result of the teaching ministry when he said, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Psalm 51:13). Turning to God is the expected result of teaching the word. Ralph M. Riggs recognizing the prominence of the teaching holds in the gospel program defines teaching as the concentrated, orderly implanting of God's word."⁸⁴ It is the Word of God that regenerates, sanctifies, illumines, and guides.

As such, teachers of God's word are expected to make the greatest impact upon the lives of their learners. They are to engage their pupils in a quest for an ever-deeper understanding of and relationship with God through their teaching. They have the goal of helping to change and mold the lives of their learners through combination of factors. In order to have meaningful impartation of God's word and learning to take place there must be a situation that have in common the Holy Spirit, a teacher, a learner, curriculum, an environment or setting, and aim, and methods that encourage learning."⁸⁵ Only the Holy Spirit surpasses or is more important than the teacher among all that is involved in meaningful learning.

84. Hurst, *And He Gave Teachers*, 2.

85. Denis H. Dirks, "The Teacher: Facilitator for Change," in *Christian Education Foundation for the Future*, ed. Robert E. Clarke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 137, 138.

The Goal of the Effective Teacher

The effective teacher is not satisfied with how well his lesson went on or with how much information he passes on until lives that are changed through his teaching. According to Dirks, to be concerned with life change is to be concerned with the biblical content of what is being taught.⁸⁶ The scripture is meant to bring about a change. Christ's focus about ministry was life change. Lives were influenced to the extent of being changed through their contact with him. Paul's goal in "warning every man and teaching every man with all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28); "to be perfect" has the idea of maturity. The purpose of God's word is to bring about a change through rebuke, correction, for training in righteousness; that the child of God may grow to maturity (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Another goal of the effective teacher is to seek or enable a wholesome change. The teacher must seek or enable change in three dimensions of his pupil's life. He should enable change in the cognitive, affective and behavioral. Live change is not complete until the whole person is influenced in each domain. The Scripture consistently support the value of knowledge being the foundation of wisdom. Renewal of the person's begins with the mind (Romans 12:2). It is the mind that shapes one's life (Proverbs 23:7). However, the scripture never views knowledge in isolation from the dimensions of attitude and will. The mind and the heart are so closely linked together in such a way that the same word is used for both. The heart represents the intellect as well as the emotions and will.

Furthermore, the effective leader sees the needs of the pupils as entry points. Dettoni, buttressing this fact about effective developmental teacher notes, he must know to 'scratch where

86. Denis H. Dirks, "The Teacher Facilitator for Change," 140.

learning itch.’⁸⁷ The developmental teacher starts where there is a felt need. The felt or the perceived needs of the pupil serve as windows of opportunity for bringing about a change. The pupils felt need could be a short term or immediate. These needs could be “problems to be solved, curiosity to be satisfied, knowledge that is needed, frustrations to be worked through, [and] dilemmas requiring solutions.”⁸⁸ God’s word should serve as the link. It is the teacher’s responsibility to bridge the gap between classroom and life. Felt need is the most common connectors to the life of the pupil. It is noted, “the closer a teacher comes to focusing on learners needs, the greater the opportunity to influence a change.”⁸⁹

The teacher that brings about a change in his pupils do not only use needs as entry points but also looks for most appropriate moments to teach. There are moments of opportunity when the learner is primed for change. Openness is at its highest peak. Such instants are unpredictable points of time when both the learner’s heart and mind are ready. These are strategic opportunities to reach below the surface and encourage life change. “Such moments of impressionability often occur when learners experience any of the following: conflict, feelings of inadequacy, felt need, problems, goal-setting, and search for meaning, difficult decision making.”⁹⁰ An effective teacher looks for opportunities such as these.

The Benefits of Gospel Devotion

Zion Ministries School has the liberty to commence each school day with a devotion conducted by the faculty, staff, or by student leaders. The immense value one derives from

87. John Dettoni, “On Being a Developmental Teacher,” *Nurture that is Christian: Developmental Perspective on Christian Education*, ed. James C. Wilhoit and John M. Dettoni (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1995), 256.

88. Dirks, “The Teacher Facilitator for Change,” 142.

89. Dirks, “The Teacher Facilitator for Change,” 142.

90. Dirks, “The Teacher Facilitator for Change,” 142.

having daily time with God warrants the effort of seeking to prioritize this initiative in the school. It is considered the high point of the school day. It takes time to cultivate the discipline of doing daily devotions. It is however comparatively easy having cooperate devotions than personal. In this way, the school devotions afford the training that could easily lend or lead to the practice of personal devotion that do show sign of personal spiritual development of the young believer. At the initial stage of the adoption of the practice of consistence devotional exercise payoff however may not seem obvious, but once devotions become a part of your daily life, it begins to yield amazing benefits. The following are some major benefits of doing daily devotions at school.

Daily devotions at school, has the potential of bringing about spiritual. Incorporating meaningful devotional sessions in the school exposes to the avenue of spiritual growth, while at the same time affords the unbeliever and seeking souls a platform for belief and a leading towards the observance of personal daily devotional life. Moments of devotions are a great place to find inspiration in one's spiritual journey and for the institution as a whole. Different readings of scriptural passages create room for reflection on the Word of God and grant the inspiration to encounter thoughtful teaching on spiritual development. The discipline of exposing the school to spirit-led school devotion and prayers could serve to give insight and encouragement towards personal prayer habit. While the impact of the daily devotion could not be realized or sensed on daily basis, yet its cumulative effect fosters growth and maturity. This practice creates room to stay connected with God and alive spiritually.

The gospel devotions have the potential of increasing one's bible knowledge, deepening of one's knowledge of God, and at the same time urging the application of those teachings as they listen to the devotional messages with seeking hearts. Besides, devotions bring peace and

comfort based on God's Word. Despite the fact that the cultivation or the practice of *daily* devotions may appear a daunting task, yet it has far-reaching benefits that make it worth taking or paying whatever it could cost to have devotional time. One sure means for spiritual growth and finding comfort and keeping one's relationship alive with God is by striving to have daily devotional reading and meditation.

Children from Christian homes have the luxury of being exposed to being raised in the Christian faith at home. Unlike the less privileged child—the Muslim child, The Christian school environment coupled with the gospel he or she receives in the school serves as the only intentional and calculated means of gospel encounter that could lead to the pupil's childhood conversion or become an enduring seed that could germinate and grow in the face of future favorable environment or when away from home in college or during adult life, away from parental home and Muslim community.

The Evangelistic Goal

The goal for reaching out with the gospel is to bring about the spiritual formation of the target person. It is not solely geared to making a decision for Christ but to be made a disciple of Christ, capable of reproducing and nurturing disciples.

Make Converts

The evangelistic goal is to reach out with the gospel to make converts. The teaching of the gospel must call for a decision. It is not enough to teach the gospel. The pupils must be urged to embrace it as it is with the gospel to adults. In the presentation, there should be a definite call to decide for Christ. This opportunity should come to every child before changing from elementary to secondary school education. It should be the dedication of every responsible parent

and teacher to encourage personal response of the child. Such should be accepted as part of the commission to see the child make a response for Jesus. In order to adequately do it, the parent/teacher must have some working knowledge of the proper theology and the awareness of the need of the target person.

There are major considerations that are vital contributors to soliciting a response when the gospel is taught. It is essential to understand the heart of the child, and at what age the child response to Christ. In addition, it is important to know the use of proper biblical doctrine and illustrations and the provisions of opportunity for the child's response are some of the facts for worthy consideration in order to bring about genuine biblical conversion.

Appeal To the Heart of The Child

The heart of a man is commonly regarded as being the seat of the intellect, the feelings and the will. It is regarded as the person's thinking, feeling and his choosing. Inchley refers to the child's heart as the thinking of the child involving mind, feeling together with its emotions and the will.⁹¹ These components reveal what the heart is, either as a wayward and a rebellious heart or a yielding and a responding heart. There must be a conscious experience that touches the mind, the intellect before a wholesome response is made. The scripture says, faith comes from the preaching of the gospel (Romans 10:17). In this regard, the truth of the gospel must be first grasped before a wholesome response.

When the delivery of the gospel is done in the power of the Holy Spirit it yields an appropriate response or feeling such as joy, surprise, fear, sorrow and love for the Lord Jesus.

91. Inchley, *All About Children*, 112.

Inchley refer to these legitimate and necessary feelings for a genuine response to Christ.⁹² All of the children's religious instructions should be based on the Bible and a teaching content must also be led by the Holy Spirit's application in order to appeal to the mind of a child.

It is certainly great to teach children the incarnation, the atonement, the miracles of Jesus etc. Paul's example and other writers of the New Testament are however worth emulating to tell the children the wonderful things about the living Christ who seeks their friendship and be their helper. Instructions in this respect become equally relevant as the need for forgiveness of the past or going to heaven in future. Children do actively desire these teaching in their lives.

They are eager to learn of Christ's love, his power, his promises of guidance and of his strength and availability. Creating opportunities for personal response of children is vital and should involve creating an appropriate environment that can encourage personal understanding and reflection that is geared to experiencing the love of God. Children camp meetings, mission trips and services, special Sunday give ideal time for making imitation that leads towards making personal decision for Christ. Allow a short time of quiet individual prayer, free from tension and a clear invitation sent out.

What the Christian Conversion Is

The importance of the word *conversion* in Christianity cannot be overstated, however, this word today, appears to many people and in many quarters, to be "embarrassing," "derogatory" and "dirty," and therefore should be avoided. It is considered to be an anathema among the Hindus of India,⁹³ and an abomination to the Muslim family and community. To

92. Inchley, *All About Children*, 113.

93. Herbert Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission: A Panoramic View of the Missions from Pentecost to the Present*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), 564.

some theologians this word is unethical and embarrassing. Some as well do equate the word conversion with proselytism and therefore advocate that it should be dropped from the Christian vocabulary, while those who believe in baptismal regeneration see the need of the word.⁹⁴

Regardless the difficulties and dangers involved in the use of the term by conservative evangelicals in making converts, in keeping with their integrity, they make sure they do not engage in proselytizing, or the use of force or offer unbiblical inducements in making converts. The offering of a material gift to induce acceptance of the gospel served as one of the demerits of the early Christian missionaries to Sierra Leone. The teacher should present the claims of Christ and hopes that the learner will voluntarily acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior.

Genuine conversion involves complete change of heart and life. It has the root meaning, “to turn.” Paul speaks of the Thessalonians, turning from idols to the one true God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). H. Kane sees conversion involving threefold turning: Turning from sin to righteousness, turning from death to life, and turning from idols to God.⁹⁵ Michael Green defines it as, “Nothing other than turning to Christ in repentance and faith, and there is no shortage of emphasis on that subject in the apostolic writings.”⁹⁶ In this case it becomes morally impossible to embrace sin and righteousness at the same time. Paul further speaks, that there is no communion or fellowship between light and darkness (2 Corinthians 6:14-15). Through conversion, one receives a “new life,” making the person as Kane puts it, “a new center of gravity, a new system of values, and new standard of morality, a new frame of reference, and a new purpose in life.”⁹⁷ Dr Coleman sees two common problems associated with the

94. Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission*, 565.

95. Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission*, 565.

96. Michael Green. *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 152.

97. Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission*, 565.

understanding of the New Life.⁹⁸ The Calvinist emphasizes the righteousness of Christ being imputed to the believer, who appear before God with the identity of the Savior (Romans 3:21, 22; 1 Corinthians 1:30), while the Arminian holds that faith is imputed for righteousness (Romans 3:24-25; 4:3). In such a case salvation is rather a divine gift with no personal merit.

Make Disciples

It is imperative that the goal for every gospel evangelistic program be targeted at making disciples. Zion Ministries School does not only seek to have its pupils come to the saving knowledge of Christ but to also see them grow and become mature in the Christian faith. In as much it is great to have the child saved, it should not be the final goal. Tim Beougher and Robert Coleman, share the view that the effective witness must possess a lifestyle of the great commission—a lifestyle that is not only consumed with the passion of reaching the lost for Christ but must be equally concerned to see these converts grow up to the extent of been in turn able to make disciples for Christ.⁹⁹ Tim, emphasizing the importance of follow-up quotes John Wesley, “not to strike one stroke in any place where I cannot follow the blow.”¹⁰⁰ Robert L. Logan does not see the need to evangelize if no plan to nurture and bring into fellowship.¹⁰¹ The writer sees it to be a grave and sinful neglect that could be likened to a woman after giving birth denies that baby of the necessary care and attention if a minister or teacher fails to walk closely

98. Robert Coleman. *The Heart of the Gospel: The Theology behind the Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1990), 176.

99. Timothy Beougher, “The Personal Life of the Effective Witness,” in *Fulfilling the Great Commission in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Lyle Dorsett and Ajith Fernando (Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2001), 53, 54; Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1998), 10.

100. Beougher, “The Personal Life of the Effective Witness,” 55.

101. Robert L. Logan, *Beyond Church Growth: Action Plan for Developing a Dynamic Church* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1989), 107.

with a Muslim child who accepts and takes stand with Christ regardless his hostile Muslim family and community background.

The act of discipleship should become a major intentional practice to undertake. This act does not only seek to establish the convert in his or her new founded faith but to have him or her become a disciple maker. Christian Discipleship is the commitment to teaching and modeling the Life of Christ with the aim of maturing that person for a life.

Jim Putman and others based on Matthew 4:19 see a complete Christian discipleship model revealed in three dimensions.¹⁰² The first reveals the convert as follower of Christ who is the head, to who the convert is expected to make a total surrender, involving self-denial. The second reveals an aspect of being willing to be molded into the image of the caller—Christ, and third; draws attention to the goal of being a disciple, which is to be committed to the caller’s mission—the mission of saving the lost. In this, one sees a picture of what it means to be a disciple. He sees discipleship as a call to self-denial, a call to being molded in the image of Christ and a call to submit to God’s mission. Mature Christians according to Jim Putman and others are those who have solid understanding of God’s word, a deep, abiding relationship with God, and are engaged in making disciples.¹⁰³ Parents are responsible for raising children, helping them grow from infants to children to young adults and then finally to be parents. Those who grow and mature usually do so under the guidance of spiritual parents as they are taught, nurtured, trained, undergo discipline justifiably and are being empowered to be able to make disciples. This fulfils God’s discipleship program.

102. Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington, *DiscipleShift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 45-48.

103. Putman and Harrington, *DiscipleShift*, 69.

The decline of Christian school ministry which could be the very reason for the massive opposing wave of secularization and religious pluralism to God's salvation plan wishing all men to be saved remains a major concern. Receiving a wakeup call of reviving and opening more Christian schools motivated by the passion of the incarnation love to reach out to children especially the disadvantage child caught up in the web of secularism and Islam's religious imposition is perceived to become God's key means of His visitation in bringing about not only an individual salvation, a generational salvation but also a national salvation.

CHAPTER FOUR

SURVEY OF 10- TO 12-YEAR-OLD PUPILS

The Survey

This chapter presents a survey of preteens in Zion Ministries Elementary school and the Methodist Primary school. It includes the aim of the survey, strategy surrounding the survey and the data interpreted.

The Purpose

The purpose of my survey was to explore ways to accomplish the church's mandate of making disciples. Besides, it was to give the Word of God a distinct place in Zion Ministries School, a Christian school that is about 25 years in existence. The writer desired to measure how Zion Ministries School in a key way maximizes its effort to reach its pupils for Christ through the use of devotion materials utilized during the daily devotions.

The Target Participants

Preteen School Pupils

The target participants were preteen pupils from Zion Ministries Elementary School and that of Methodist primary schools. Zion Ministries Elementary School, a private Christian school located in two different locations and settings. The main campus of this school is located in Bo, an urban center, while its branch campus is located in a deprived rural village called Bandawa-Toobu Junction, six miles apart. This branch school is strategically located in a rural setting to cater for pupils from more than 12 other remote villages in that chiefdom. Most of these rural

villages, as typical of remote rural villages in the country are accessed by walking through winding footpaths while very few could be reached through extremely rough roads that are hard to reach by vehicles. Schools are very rare and are underdeveloped. The inhabitants of these rural areas are mostly farmers and illiterates; they take their children to work with them at the farm with little or no sense of importance of sending them to school.

The main campus of Zion Ministries School is located in Bo, the second capital city in the country. It is an urban center, centrally located in the country. This city is approximately 250 kilometers (160 miles), Southeast of Freetown, the nation's capital city. Bo is the leading financial, economic and educational center of Southern Sierra Leone. It has a population of 233,684.¹ Bo has been an outstanding center of education for the interior of the country since the opening of the secondary school, called the Bo Government Secondary School for the sons of Mende chiefdoms' authorities, opened in 1906.² This city now hosts government, Christian and Muslim schools. It has Njala University, the second largest in the country.

To better understand the current state of the Christian school in the light of how it had been effective in fulfilling the church's mandate in the past brought the Methodist Primary school into focus. Methodist primary school represented one of the oldest Christian schools while Zion Ministries Elementary represented the newer Christian schools. Methodist primary school belongs to the Methodist Mission Sierra Leone. It is located in the same urban city with Zion Ministries Elementary school. The Methodist mission started in Sierra Leone as a work

1. "Population of Cities in Sierra Leone 2022," World Population Review, accessed November 19, 2022, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/cities/sierra-leone>.

2. Joe A. D. Alie, *A New History of Sierra Leone* (Oxford: MacMillan, 1990), 200-201.

started by the Wesleyan Methodist church in 1792, at the request of converted settlers from Nova Scotia.³

The Selected Sample

This project's target was the preteens attending Christian primary or elementary schools in the entire country. According to 2019 School Census report there are 11,168 primary and secondary schools (private and public) in the country with an enrolment of about 2.6 million school children. The number of schools in the country was 11,034. 6,299 (57.1%) were mission owned; 1,676 (15.2%) were government, 1,676 (15.2%) were privately owned.⁴ Considering the difficulties and the cost it could involve in getting to make a survey of all the Christian primary schools in the country, it becomes virtually impossible. The use of a sample of the target population to accomplish the objective of the paper became a matter of consideration. Given that the sample may represent only a portion of the target population.⁵ In this regard, in order to render a valid and credible paper the researcher examined carefully whether the selected sample frame fits the study objectives or hypotheses. This helped to prevent bias and to make a reliable and effective representation of the target population. A sample is a representative of the population or a subset of the population; one expected to have the same characteristics as the

3. Alie, *A New History of Sierra Leone*, 57.

4. "Facts and figures on schools, teachers and pupils in Sierra Leone," TSC HR Manual, accessed November 19, 2022, <https://hrmanual.tsc.gov.sl/books/13-the-teaching-service-in-sierra-leone/page/facts-and-figures-on-schools-teachers-and-pupils-in-sierra-leone>; 2019 School Census, Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Basic and Senior secondary Education, 2020 Annual School Census Report.

5. Uma Sekaran and Roger Bougie, *Research Method for Business: A Skill-building Approach*, 6th ed. (Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2013), 241.

population it represents.⁶ Based on the choice of convenience, the needed information was obtained from members of two Christian elementary schools.⁷

Zion Ministries Elementary School, a school brought into being by the writer's initiative is located in Bo and was selected as the primary sample population. However, Considering the age of this comparatively newer Christian school that is about 25 years of existence and that of its current limited pupil population, an additional school for sampling was considered in order to render a more credible and reliable research paper. The Methodist Primary school located in the same township, a school that started operations in the country around the 17th century was made an additional school for the investigation. This school was amongst the earliest Christian schools that saw successful mission interventions in the country.

Characteristics and Some Pertinent Features of the Target Group

The project was centered on the preteens, pupils between the ages of 10-12 who are in a Christian school. This age category was assumed to belong to grade 6 depending on how early the pupils enrolled at school or on the pupil's learning capacity. This category of children could also be referred to as Tweens. They belong to the age category with a one in front of it that doesn't end in teen: 10, 11 and 12.⁸ 13-19 is teen though 18 and 19 years old are in a different category since they are sometimes in certain places considered as adults.

Three reasons are pointed out why a 10year-old is a preteen. First of all, 10 years old is double digit age. Secondly, it is the typical age when puberty begins for children, especially for

6. Sekaran and Bougie, *Research Method for Business*, 243.

7. Sekaran and Bougie, *Research Method for Business*, 252.

8. Juliann Garey, "Parenting Tweens: What You Should Know," accessed November 19, 2022, <https://childmind.org/article/what-parents-should-know-about-tweens/#:~:text=Kids%20between%208%20and%2012,wanting%20to%20be%20more%20independent.>

girls and finally, this age group is seen to be very close to their teenage years.⁹ It will only be in three years when they become 13 years old. In some countries like Sierra Leone, this age category is recognized as one when kids are ready to transit into secondary school, a period they could be found in their final year in primary school. Tweens are not exactly teens yet but are close. They are 10-12 years old. Their age does not end with teen as in number 13 but close to it.

Physically, they are normally strong and healthy, with abounding energy, rapid growth, noisy, competitive and love to do things, often times they tend to act first and think afterwards. Mentally, they have a strong geographical and historical sense. Besides, they tend to be very inquisitive and with varieties of interests. They do like to read, write and talk and do have varying abilities. Their rote memory tends to be at its peak. They are critical especially with adults. Socially, they do accept responsibility and do not like an authority placed over them.¹⁰ They are not quite comfortable with opposite sexes. They are even scornful of the opposite. They have strong instinct for club. Their emotional and spiritual characteristic includes self-centeredness; they do have a keen sense of humor and recognizes what sin means. They have questions about the faith. Many do express deep concern about their parents' family life.¹¹ These understanding do help in responding appropriately according to the needs of the age group.

They are also among the assaulted generation. They are assaulted by contacts with Wars, Famine, Natural Disaster, Physical and Electronic Violence. They are assaulted by a breakdown in social values and family norms—dishonorable parents and confused children. Leaderless societies ruled by popularly acknowledged perverted men, clowns and weaklings who cloak their

9. Garey, "Parenting Tweens."

10. Robert Joseph Choun, "Teaching Children," in *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Teaching: A Comprehensive Resource on the Distinctness of True Christian Teaching*, ed. Kenneth O. Gangel and Howard G. Hendricks (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988), 116-117.

11. Choun, "Teaching Children," 116-117.

personal inadequacies in vice iron brutality. They are as well assaulted by images in the Air Waves relayed by men with predetermined mission of molding a positive response to things generally acknowledge as being wholesome. Sometimes, they are assaulted with unrealistic expectations of them by their parents or society or both.

At church, they may put on the feeling to have outgrown the children's ministry and at the same time seen to be too young for youth group. They stand to be in limbo, not quite sure as to what they are; and are therefore on a search for their true identity, usually ready to welcome a change, either for the better or the worst. This age category needs to be engaged now because they are very tender for the Gospel at this age. Any further delay could generally leave them with very little chance of making decision for Christ. George Barna's research group have shown that kids are more likely to come to Christ before the age of 14.¹²

The Design

Research design is the overall strategy or framework of research methods and techniques chosen by the researcher to collect, analyze and reporting of data.¹³ In order to render this design effective, it must reflect neutrality, reliability, validity and generality. Regardless previous assumptions held by the researcher results from the scores and conclusions should be free bias. The design must be one that is reliable and must be able to help gauge the results according to the project's objectives. Besides, it must be able to have its outcome applied elsewhere.

Considering the category of people represented by the respondents, the writer resolved to employ a questionnaire instrument to get the needed pieces of information. Taking into account

12. Rick Lawrence, "Can Teenagers Come to Faith in Jesus?" accessed November 19, 2022, <https://youthministry.com/can-teenagers-come-faith-jesus/>.

13. John W. Creswell. *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2007), 58.

the suitability and trust worthiness of the thesis-project paper, the writer considered survey method and questionnaire development, a design and an approach best for analyzing the data collection process. It is a descriptive method that allowed accessing attitudes, behaviors, demographic data, and aptitudes through the use of questionnaires. A survey allows a researcher to collect a large amount of data in a relatively short period. Besides, it is less expensive than many other data collection techniques.

In addition, it can be used to collect information on a broad range of things that could include personal facts, attitudes, past behaviors and opinions. The use of questionnaire was considered appropriate as it grants the opportunity of doing original research, collection of data, get information that has not been used by anyone else that could be incorporated in the thesis project. Also, questionnaire is favored because the anonymity of the respondents is guaranteed. Besides, this application rendered an easy means of collecting large amount of data in a relatively short or brief period of time. Besides, it was seen to be fairly easy to tabulate and to score. Moreover, it minimized the use of many open-ended questions.

The Procedure

Institutional Review Board Permission

In order to have this survey with the target category of people, the researcher had to first gain the approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary to undertake a survey of minors—class six pupils between ages 10 to 12 years in Zion Ministries Elementary and in Methodist Primary Schools. This was followed by an informed consent document which had the title of the thesis—project, the purpose, the procedure, the risk, the benefits, the compensation and a note on confidentiality, soliciting voluntary participation. It

was prepared and sent to prospective parents of candidates who were expected to undertake the survey, soliciting their consent.

How the Informed Consent Document Was Delivered

The researcher, through the kind permission and assistance of the authorities, requested the use of their school facilities for the voluntary participation of their class 6 pupils in the researcher's Doctor of Ministry project geared towards promoting quality education in the Zion Ministries Elementary School. Copies of the Informed Consent Documents were made available to interested parents and guardians of the class six pupils in the targeted schools at the parent/teacher's meeting held at the respective schools two weeks before the end of the school year. The researcher was granted permission to brief those parents present about the thesis-project. After the briefing, the researcher placed at the exit point of the hall where the meeting was held and requested interested parents/guardians present to pick up a copy of the Informed Consent document to be completed and returned to the researcher to serve as formal approval, to have their children's participation in the requested survey. The completed forms were to be returned before the final day of the academic year when kids were expected to be on campus for the end of the school year's closing courtesies.

Administering the Questionnaire and the Incentive

Fifty parents/guardians on behalf of kids at Zion Ministries Elementary School returned the completed Informed Consent forms, giving their approval to have their kids participate; while out of the 35 parents who received the Informed Consent forms on behalf of their kids at the Methodist school, only 30 returned the completed forms indicating their consent. The completion of the questionnaire took place on the August 16, 2021, the last day of the academic year at

school, after the pupils had received final yearly admonition from their various school authorities and the issuance of report cards to parents/guardians. The class six kids were assembled to complete the questionnaire. Once more a general briefing was made regarding their voluntary participation as spelled out in the informed consent forms which the parents had earlier on received. It was read and explained to all the waiting pupil participants. To each of the target schools 2 qualified, experienced and pupils oriented primary school teachers who were not teachers from the targeted schools helped to administer the questionnaire, and where it seemed necessary to help respondents with question which participants might have without influencing their responses to the questions, nor breach anonymity. These assisting teachers had been earlier on educated on the purpose and objectives of the proposed thesis-project and had helped in examining the questions on the instrument to see how suitable they are for preteens of that caliber.

To encourage participation of the target pupils in a project that is geared towards improving the education offered at Zion Ministries Elementary school, in accordance with earlier promise made, the researcher provided a two-way transportation cost for each participant, and also gave each attending pupil a packet of biscuit; sweet and a can drink for refreshment. In total, there were 70 participants - out of a class of 30 pupils in Zion Ministries Elementary School, Bo, 25 appeared to complete the questionnaire; out of 20 in Zion Ministries Elementary school, Bandawa, 15 participated and out of 35 pupils invited at the Methodist Primary school 30 came to complete the questionnaire.

The Questions

The questionnaire was used for the collection of data from participants of a research project. It sought for the opinion of individuals of a sample or a population on issues directly related to the objectives of a research project. Questionnaires are not only efficient data collection mechanism in descriptive or explanatory study but are considered to be generally less expensive and time consuming than interviews and observations.¹⁴ It is also noted that, the characteristics a good questionnaire must consist of questions that are précised and are not ambiguous. Besides it must be constructed in a way it could be easily understood; and it must be capable of rendering a précised answer; it must not contain words that have vague meaning; must not have words that requires rigorous calculations; must not be in a form that could cause biasness, it must not be length or wordy; and must exactly cover the objective of the inquiry.

The pupils had twelve (12) items on the Likert scale questionnaire primarily aimed at understanding evangelistic, teaching and discipleship making disposition at Zion Ministries Elementary School, and fifteen (15) items that sought to understand the preteen, his/her background, age, the religious affiliations, and the motivating factors for being a Christian school.

The initial number of questions on the research questionnaire for the preteens was 50. After careful and repeated reflections on the questions, in the light of the working span of the child and the limitations of the project's focus made the researcher limit his questions to 40. Upon further examination of the questions on the questionnaire in conjunction with three requested assistants of qualify and experience primary school teachers, helped to check the items on the instrument making sure the questions are simple enough for the understanding of the target pupils. This further reduced the questions for the targeted pupils on the questionnaire to

14. Sekaran and Bougie, *Research Method for Business*, 247.

30. These same qualified primary school disposed teachers, whose comments and suggested were entertained in the formation of the questionnaire instrument, which had not been personally associated with Zion Ministries Elementary nor with Methodist Primary School pupils, administered the questions to the pupils at the three different school campuses. The questionnaire was anonymous and had no time limit for completing it.

Order Of Questions

Regarding clarity and the order of questions on what the researcher wanted the questionnaire to address, the questions were carefully and deliberately written point by point. The researcher made sure all the questions on the instrument clearly relate to the overall objectives of his thesis-project. The questionnaire began with group questions targeted at testing the Christian school's evangelistic, teaching and discipleship making ability. The general questions were considered easier to answer which included demographic questions and other general questions placed at the end of the questionnaire. The rationale for this structural arrangement was geared towards maintaining positive interest in responding to the instrument right through the project, preventing pupils from getting bored towards the end of their response.

Nature Of Questions

The questions posed sought to understand the evangelistic and discipleship making ability of the teaching of the gospel that went on in the Christian school. The questions on the instrument were aimed at finding answers to the following: *How was the daily gospel devotions conducted by Christian missions and/or private Christian schools helpful in fulfilling the great commission? How was the gospel message effectively shared through the daily devotions*

conducted in the school? How effective was the teaching of the gospel in the Christian school? Why Muslim parents or guardians sought to have their children in Christian school? How important or crucial were the preteens considered in the discharge of the Great Commission? (What makes the preteen strategically special for the proclamation of the gospel?) How can the Christian worker be helped to discover relevant approach in reaching the preteens, many of whom come from Muslim back ground or homes? (How to reach Muslim kids for Christ?) One of the questions that may arise could be How can Christian schools be open to accepting pupils from other faiths especially from Islamic background without compromising the purpose and values of the school?

The Assessment

Likert scale questions were used to help discover the strength and the areas of weakness in the Christian school. This scale was adopted to serve as the yard stick of measurement. The 5 point -Likert scale measuring the attitude, satisfactions and experiences of the pupils that spans from the positive end to an opposite direction with respondents having to select one of the given answer options was used.¹⁵ The open-ended questions were used in areas or situations where the researcher did not know how participant could respond or did not want to influence the respondent concerning requested answers. The questionnaire used is found in appendix A of this write up.

This 5 Points Likert Scale Questionnaire interpretation took the following steps: First, the researcher assigned each response a point value, from 1 to 5, based on the number of responses. Secondly, common values for the options started with "strongly disagree" at 1 point and "strongly agree" at 5 was established, thirdly a table was created for the results to find the

15. Sekaran and Bougie, *Research Method for Business*, 220.

Mode and the average response (Mean). And lastly, the mode revealed the most common response to each statement while the mean gave the overall average response.

Pretest and Posttest

To test the effects of a treatment, subjects are subjected to pretest where in a measure of dependent variable is taken followed by a second measure of dependent variable that is referred to as posttest.¹⁶ Pretest - Posttest designs applied was a form of quasi-experimental research which allowed for less complicated assessment of intervention applied to the target participants. This measures the degree of change that occurred as a result of the treatments or the intervention.¹⁷ The researcher selected 5 pupils who had spent more than three years in the Christian school to test their understanding about the gospel message in order to compare their understanding of the message to that of those who had spent at least 6 years in the school. Three claimed to have an Islamic heritage while the other two claimed to be Christians. They were tested with six of the questions that were on the main questionnaire instrument. Their answers showed no remarkable difference in their understanding of the gospel. They rather somehow revealed a stronger contrary position or a stronger negative view on orthodox Christian positions.

When asked about their understanding about the triune God, they denied the fact that Christians worship one true God. Besides, salvation of works was chosen over that of grace. The overall mean showed a neutral position on the pretest while the post test revealed a negative stand to major Christian doctrines. It is observed pupils were rather steadily established in their Muslim heritage continued to be indoctrinated by their parents. Furthermore, field testing the instrument with other pupils, my grandson, a preteen, 11 years two months old, and four of his

16. Sekaran and Bougie, *Research Method for Business*, 177-178.

17. Sekaran and Bougie, *Research Method for Business*, 184-185.

colleagues within the same age range, eleven to 12 years four months old who belonged to a different Christian school other than the two targeted schools. Discoveries made helped improve on the questions for clarity. It helped to identify questions on the questionnaire that appeared to be ambiguous or seemed confusing to the pilot participants that were observed to cause biased answers and therefore removed or restructured for better understanding and clarity.

Purpose of the Instrument

The instrument on the whole sought to understand how the Christian school gospel teaching influenced the cognitive, the affective and the behavioral pattern of its pupils. The cognitive aspect of the teaching offered at the school was observed to be on the average. In most cases, the formal or intellectual sense of the Word of God was evident, showing the fact that there is some degree of teaching that appeals to the intellect. However, knowing the Word intellectually it is not enough. There was also an evident of lack of good doctrinal understanding of the scripture. The pupil does not only need to be equipped with knowledge about God, but also need that which shapes that pupil's affections towards God and also direct his/her actions according to God's will. Bible doctrines are not designed to merely increase information, but rather, are meant to produce radical, organic transformation. In addition to the lack of good Bible doctrine there is an evident of lack of planned and logical teaching.

The second category of the Likert scale questions sought to investigate was to find out the extent pupils were being affected by the gospel teachings that goes on in the school. According to the survey result, the rating showed to be moderately high.

The third category of investigation on this instrument was directed to how far the gospel preached at the school did impact the lives of the pupils that go through the Christian school.

Based on findings, observations and opinions, there is clear evidence as to the teaching of the gospel not being able to accomplish the goal of the Christian School before the kids exit elementary school for secondary school. Christian impact gotten in the school showed to be minimal, low. Pupils were not convinced of their need of accepting Jesus as Lord. Positive personal Christian contact from teachers especially was found to be low. On the whole, average/mean score range rendered a verbal interpretation of neutrality. In this case the Christian gospel influences in the Christian school were not strong enough to warrant transformation of the lives that went through that Christian educational institution.

This questionnaire was used to help discover practices that either helped or hindered the spiritual development of the pupils and of the school as a whole. The researcher reported the mean responses of the questions or statements posed on the Likert scale questionnaire. This approach was to assert which practices that were important in developing the pupil's current spirituality, shaping their faith and Christian behavior.¹⁸ The results were cross tabulated the means to these questions. Comparing and cross tabulating the findings helped identify patterns within the data, and these patterns helped to answer the questions as to which preteen ministry practice were most helpful or not in developing a lifelong Christian faith and behavior.

From past experience and as a transformational leader through the guidance of the Holy Spirit would take what is learnt from the past in order to find ways to assist the faith development of the young people I will be targeting in the future. This methodology helped me frame the results of the research. Those results are presented in the next section.

18. Peter M. Nardi, *Doing Survey Research: A guide to Quantitative Methods*. 3rd ed. (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2014), 161.

The Survey Findings

Here the findings of the survey instrument which sought to determine the Christian school's effectiveness in teaching the gospel message are presented. There were 12 questions on a five-point Likert scale rating followed by some general questions about the targeted pupils. There were total of 70 respondents. The Likert scale questions sought to understand how the gospel teaching cognitively, affectively and behaviorally appealed to their pupils.

The Cognitive

The Bible Is the True Word of God

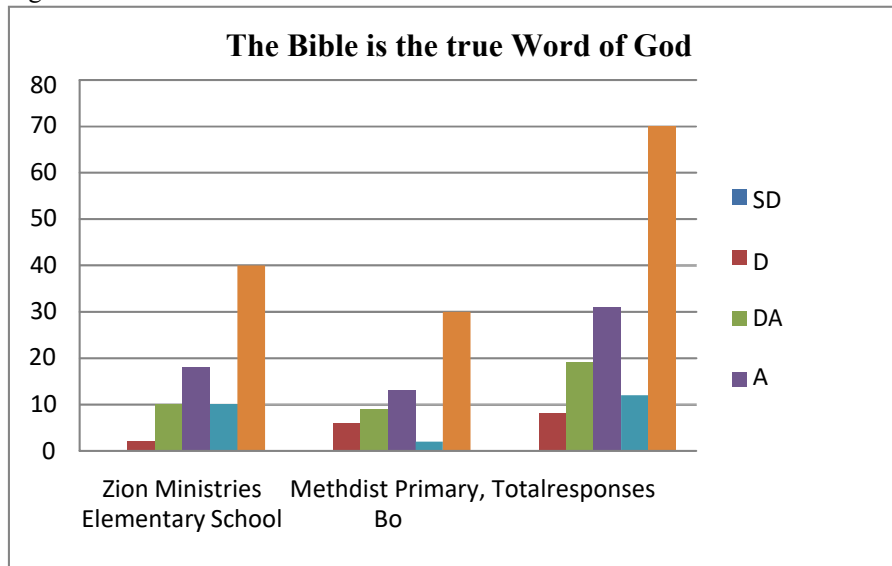
It is understood before the gospel could have a successful delivery outcome, it must be aimed at reaching the whole person.¹⁹ In this regard, the first place the appeal is made is to the intellect through the facts of the Word of God clearly made known. Secondly, it must appeal to the emotion through the facts presented. Thirdly the teaching must appeal to the will of the person through the facts and feelings gotten from the teaching that demands an action.

My investigation began with the intellect, seeking to understand how the gospel satisfied the intellect of its participants at the chosen Christian schools. The first category of questions on the application sought to investigate the knowledge acquired through the teaching of the gospel. The first question in this regard sought to understand the basis of belief and practice of the respondents in target schools. The following statement was made, "The Bible is the true Word of God." On the whole, respondents to this statement mildly agreed to the Bible being the true Word of God (3.7 average). Only 12 (17.14%) strongly believed that it is the true Word of God,

19. David L. Edwards, "Designing Biblical Instruction," in *The Christian Handbook on Teaching: A comprehensive Resource on the Distinctiveness of True Christian Teaching*, ed. Kenneth O. Gangel and Howard G. Hendricks. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988), 50.

while 31 (44.29%) only agreed but not strongly. Eight (11.43%) disagreed and 19(27.14%) took a midway position, they neither disagreed nor agreed.

Figure 1. The Bible Is the True Word of God

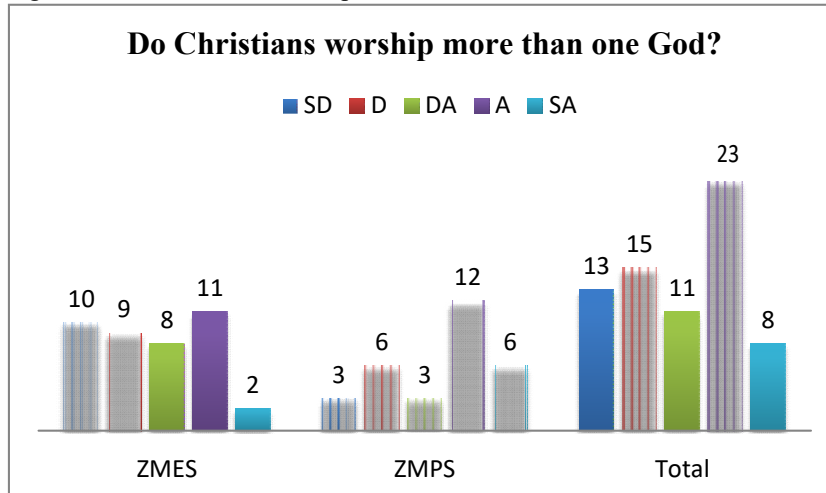


Do Christians Worship More Than One God?

Responding to this negative statement: *Christians do worship more than one God*, 23 (32.86%) agreed plus 8 (11.43%) who strongly agreed. Only 15 (21.43%) of the total number of respondents disagreed, together with 13 (18.57%) who strongly disagreed. 11 held a neutral position. Findings from the two sample schools, Zion Ministries Elementary School (ZMES); and Methodist Primary School (MPS), the respondents' knowledge about the Christian faith revealed lack of the correct understanding of whom the God of the Christians is, as the finding revealed a moderately low response to the statement. In Zion Ministries Elementary School only 9 (22.5%) of the respondents disagreed plus 10 (25%) who strongly disagreed, while 11 respondents agreed, plus 2 who strongly agreed. 8 respondents held a neutral position. At the MPS only 3 (7.5%) disagreed together with 6 (15%) who disagreed with the statement of out a

total of 30 respondents of the MPS. The verbal interpretation on the overall total response showed to be moderately high.

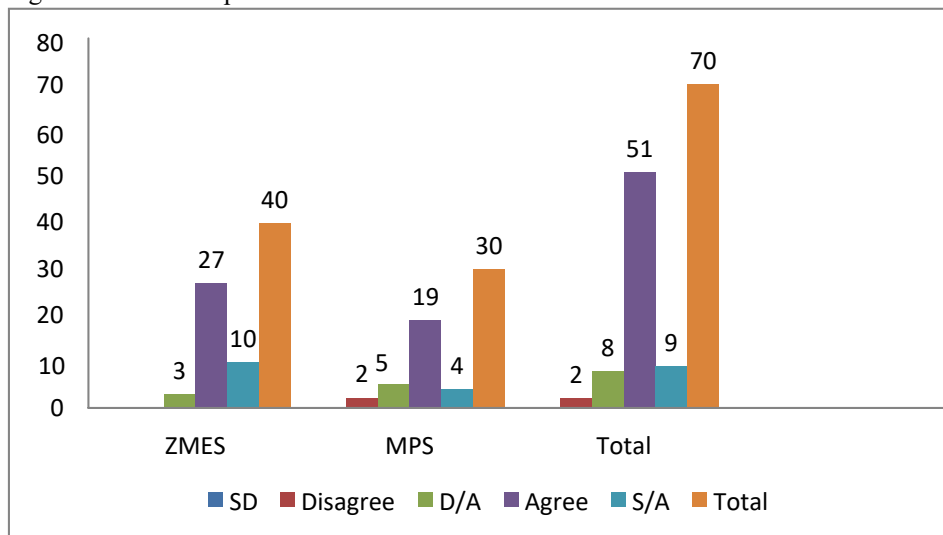
Figure 2. Do Christians Worship More Than One God?



Satan Tempts God's Children

Concerning the statement *Satan tempts God's children to disobey*, there was a general agreement of understanding on this statement. Not only 51 (72.85%) of the total respondents agreed, but an addition of 9 (12.86) of the respondents strongly agreed. Only 2 disagreed and 8 who held a neutral stand. The response on the whole revealed a high level of verbal interpretation of agreement concerning the preceding statement.

Figure 3. Satan Tempts God's Children

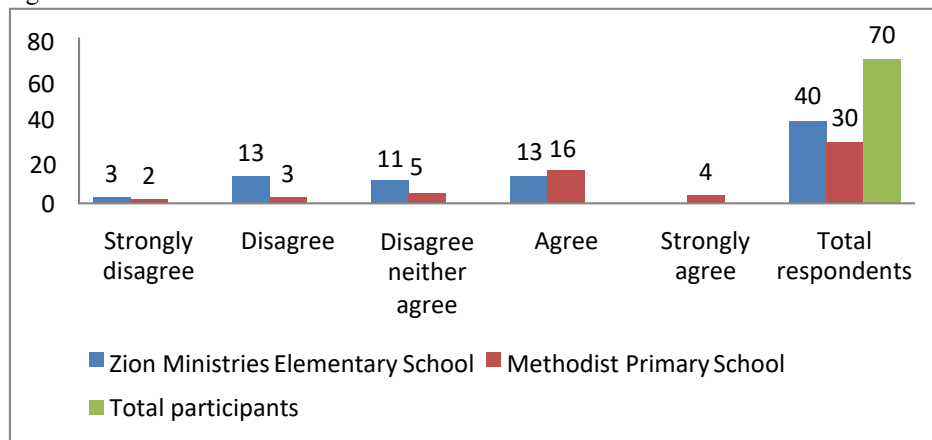


One's Good Work Is What Saves from Hell

Report on the findings of the following statement: *My good work is what saves me from hell*. Findings from the total respondents of 70 pupils had a verbal interpretation of a moderate position. Out of the total respondents, 29 (41.43%) agreed to the statement, “My good works saves me from hell,” in addition to 4 (5.71%) who strongly agreed with the statement. Only 16 (22.86) disagreed together with 5 (7.14%) who strongly disagreed with the statement. 16 (22.86%) of the respondents neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement.

At the ZMES, 13 respondents equally disagreed and agreed with the statement. 11 took a neutral position. Only 3 of the 40 respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. 11 held a neutral position on the statement. Respondents at the MPS had 16 of its respondents agree with the statement together with 4 who strongly agreed. Only 3 disagreed, together with 2 who strongly agreed, while 5 held neutral opinion on the statement. Greater number of respondents at the MPS agreed with the statement than respondents at the ZMES.

Figure 4. One's Good Work Saves



Emotion/Feeling

The Gospel Teaching Sessions at The School Are Boring

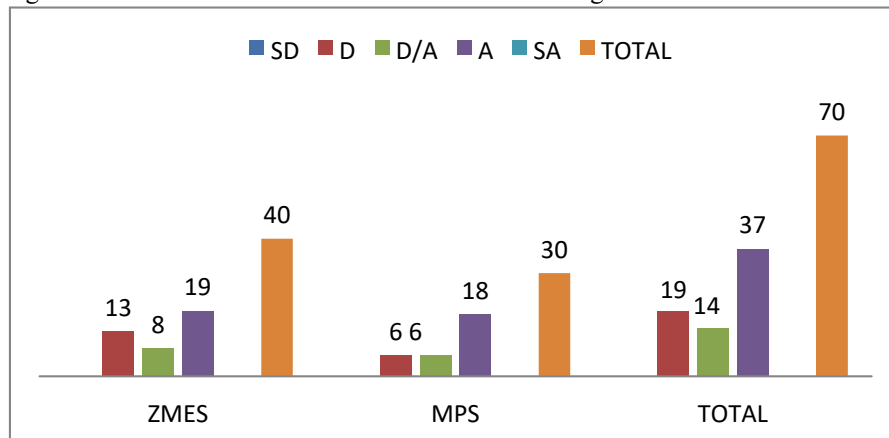
Seeking to understand how affective the teaching of the gospel in the Christian school, the first the statement posed in this regard was: *The gospel teaching sessions at school are boring*. The data report on this statement revealed that, out of the total 70 respondents, 37 (52.86%) agreed that the gospel teachings moments at school are boring, not quite interesting. However, 19 (27.14%) disagreed, while 14, which is 20% of the total respondents held neutral position.

At the Methodist primary school 18 (60%) of the total of 30 respondents agreed to the statement. and 6 (20%) disagreed. However, 6 (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed. At the ZME School out of the total of 40 respondents, 19 (47.5%) agreed to the statement that pupils are not interested in attending the schools' gospel devotional teachings; while only 13 (32.5) disagreed and 8 took a neutral position.

The overall report showed a neutral response on the gospel teachings that goes on in the Christian schools—it is neither interesting nor uninteresting to the pupils. It stands to reason that

there are clear indications of the need to improve the quality of teachings that goes on in the Christian school in order to arouse the interest of the pupils.

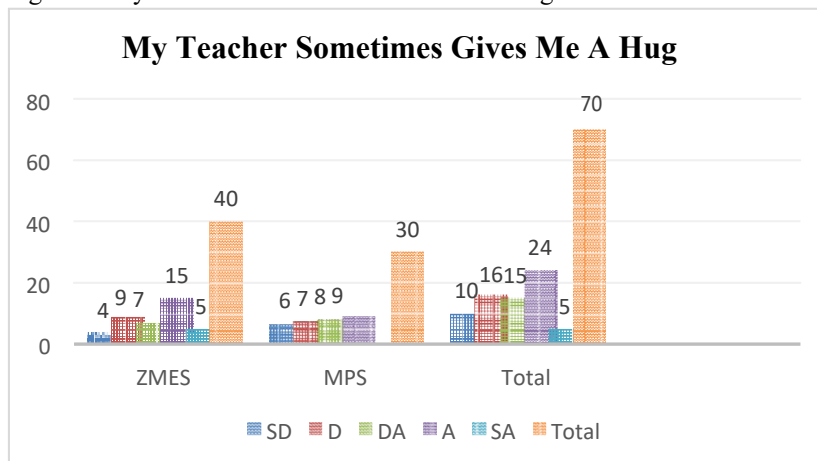
Figure 5. The Devotional Services at School Are Boring



My Teacher Sometime Gives Me A Hug

Looking at the report on the following statement, *my teacher sometime gives me a hug*, 24 out of the total of 70 respondents agreed to it, in addition to 5 who strongly agreed to the fact that the teacher always loves pupils. 15 neither disagreed nor agreed; 16 disagreed together with 10 respondents who strongly disagreed. 9 of the Methodist primary school respondents agreed, while 8 neither disagreed nor agreed and 7 disagreed. Out of 40 respondents at ZME School 15 agreed together with 5 who strongly agreed to the statement, 9 disagreed, together with 4 who strongly disagreed. 7 remained indecisive. The average on the overall was found to be in the range of being neutral. Pupils do not know for sure whether the teacher always loves them. The verbal interpretation showed to be moderately high.

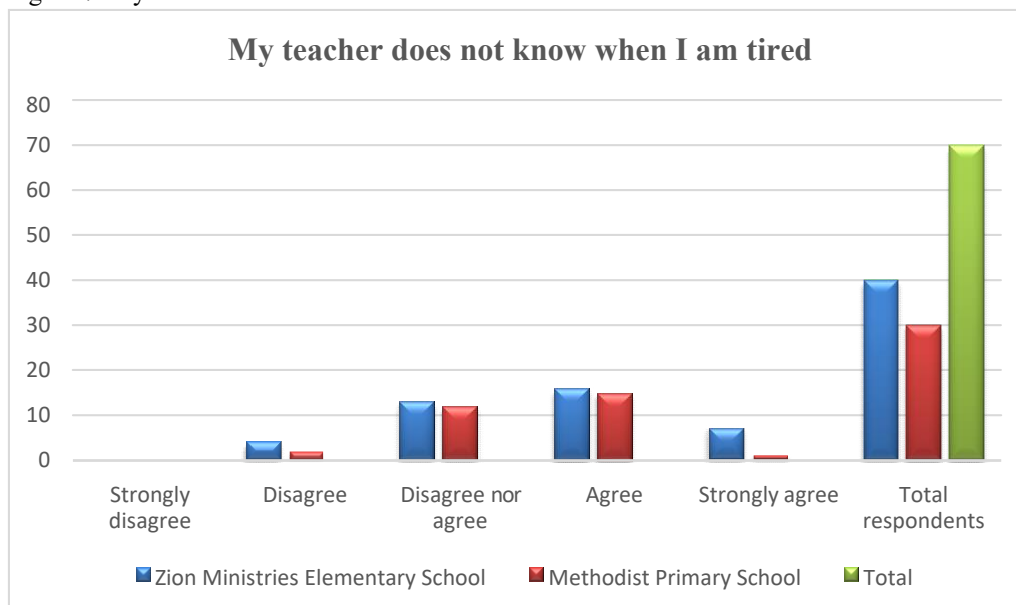
Figure 6. My Teacher Sometimes Gives Me A Hug



My Teacher Does Not Know When I Am Tired

Report on the statement, *my teacher does not know when I am tired*. With regards this statement, it is revealed that out of 70 respondents, 31 agreed and 8 strongly agreed with the statement. While only 6 of the respondents disagreed. 25 were found indecisive, uncertain about their teacher know when they are hungry. On the whole, there was a high general agreement of the teacher not knowing the need of the pupils.

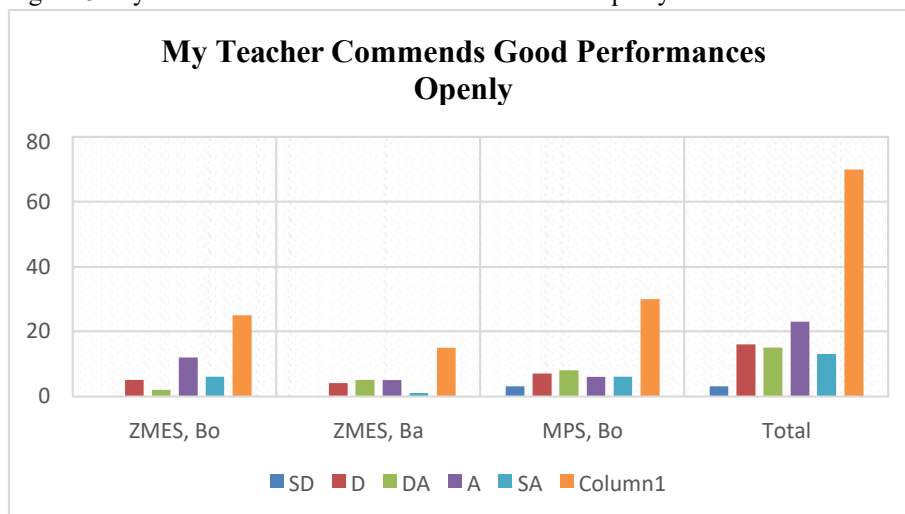
Figure 7. My Teacher Does Not Know When I Am Tired



My Teacher Commends Good Performances Openly

Out of 70 respondents, 23 agree together with 13 who strongly agreed with the statement indicating their class *teacher commends good performance openly*. 3 strongly disagreed, plus 16 who disagreed while 15 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. 6 of the MPS respondents agreed together with 6 who strongly agreed, while 8 neither disagreed nor agreed with the total respondents at the Methodist primary. Zion Ministries Elementary Schools had 17 who agreed together with 7 who strongly agreed to the statement, while 7 disagreed and 9 strongly disagreed. The overall response showed a verbal interpretation of neutrality.

Figure 8. My Teacher Commends Good Performances Openly



Action/Will

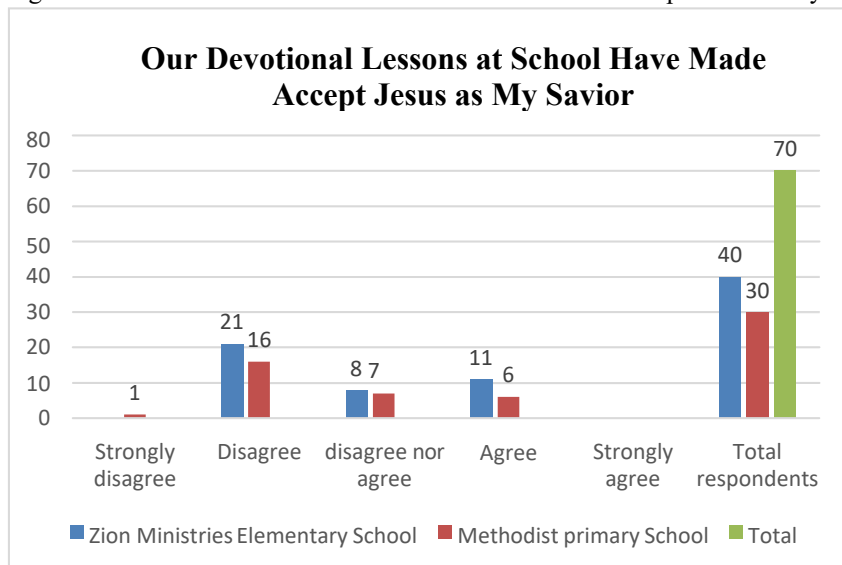
The third section sought to understand how the gospel taught in the Christian school influenced the behavior of its pupils. This area sought to investigate the outcome of the teaching of the gospel mirrored in the lives of the pupils. It is part of the effective teacher's work to have

behavioral objectives that help to clarify the intent of the lesson and make it easier to measure the student achievement.²⁰

Our Devotional Lessons at School Have Made Me Accept Jesus as My Savior

In order to ascertain the behavioral impact of the teaching of the gospel on the lives of the pupils, the statement was posed to the respondents; *our devotional lessons at school have made me accept Jesus as my Savior*. Report on this statement showed a response of disagreement and a low verbal interpretation. It was discovered that out of the total of 70 respondents, 37 disagreed to the statement in addition to 1 (one) that strongly disagreed. 15 had no certainty with regards to the statement presented to them. At the ZMES out of its 40 respondents, 21 disagreed, while 11 agreed. Eight were not sure about been challenged in that direction. In the MPS 16 disagreed in addition to one who strongly disagreed with the statement of being challenged to accept Jesus as my Savior. Overall verbal interpretation on the statement showed a position of neutrality.

Figure 9. Our Devotional Lessons at School Have Made Accept Jesus as My Savior

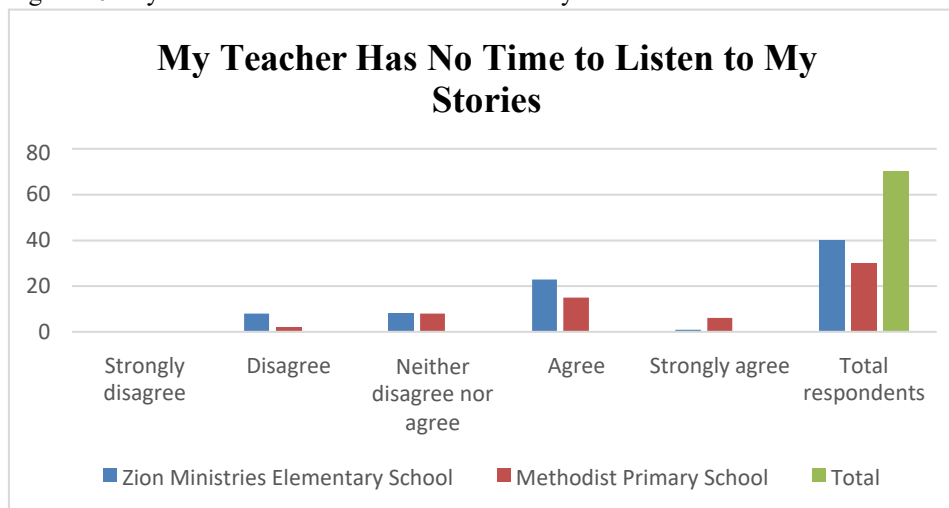


20. Donald C. Orlich, Robert J. Harder, Michael S. Trevisan, Abbie H. Brown, Darcy E. Miller, eds. *Teaching Strategies: A Guide to Better Instruction* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1985), 33, 47.

My Teacher Has No Time to Listen to My Stories

Out of the total of 70 respondents, 38 (54.28%) agreed and seven (10%) strongly agreed to the statement: *My teacher has no time after class hours to listen to my stories*. Only 10 of them disagreed. A total of 16 respondents neither disagreed nor agreed; at the Zion Ministries Elementary Schools, 23 (57.5%) out of 40 respondents agreed to the statement in addition to 1 person who strongly agreed. Only 8 respondents disagreed. 8 neither agreed nor disagreed. Out of the total of 30 who responded at the Methodist Primary School, 15 agreed, together with 6 who strongly agreed, while 8 were neutral. Only 2 respondents disagreed. The overall findings revealed a mean of 3.64, a response of agreement, with a high verbal interpretation.

Figure 10. My Teacher Has No Time to Listen to My Stories

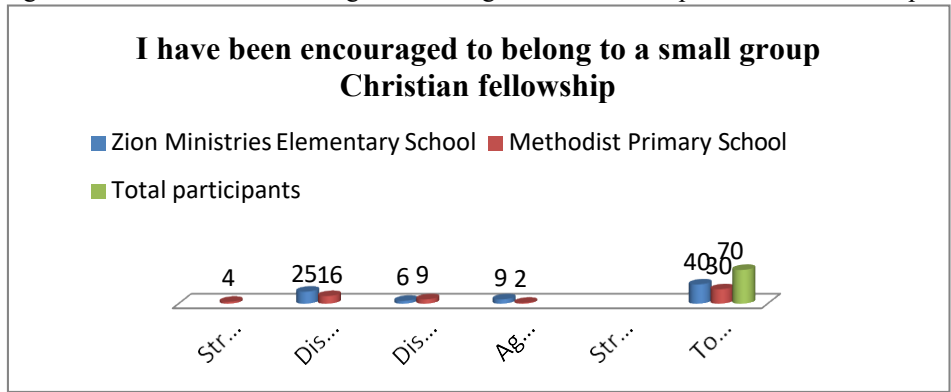


I Have Been Encouraged to Join a Small Group Christian Fellowship

Seeking to further understand how pupils' behavioral pattern has been influenced by the gospel teaching received in the Christian school, the following statement was posed: *I have been encouraged to join a small Christian fellowship*. To this statement, 41 of the respondents disagreed, together with four who strongly disagreed. Fifteen of the respondents neither disagreed nor agreed to the statement. Only 15 (21.43%) agreed with the statement of been

encouraged to join a Christian fellowship. On the whole, the respondent showed disagreement, with a mean of 2.5, with a low verbal interpretation on the statement.

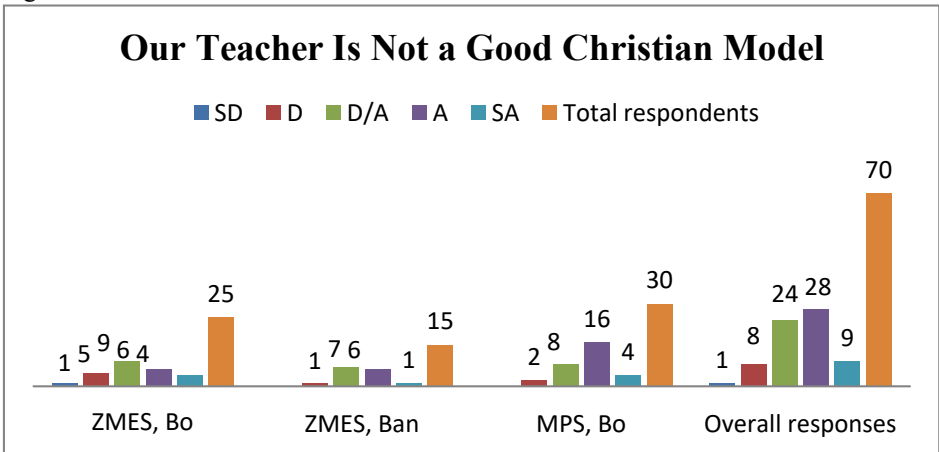
Figure 11. I Have Been Encouraged to Belong to A Small Group Christian Fellowship



Our Teacher Is Not a Good Christian Model

Responding to the statement, “Our teacher is not a good Christian model,” 28 (40%) responded in agreement together with 7 (10%) who strongly agreed, while 19 (27.14%) disagreed together with 6 (8.57%) who strongly disagreed. 12 (17.14%) neither disagreed nor agreed. On the whole there was a high verbal interpretation of agreement with a mean of 3.51 on the statement. Our teachers are not good Christian models.

Figure 12. Our Teacher Is Not a Good Christian Model



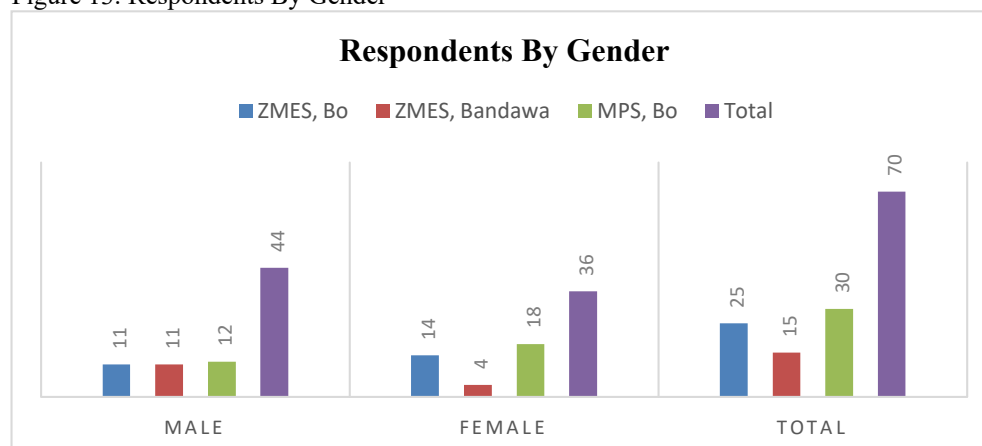
General Questions

The following were the general area the questionnaire sought to investigate.

The Gender of the Respondents

Out of the total number of 70 who responded there were 36 (51.43%) females and 34 (48.57%) males. In ZMES, there were 22 males and 18 females (ZMES, Bo 11 males and 14 females and ZMES, Bandawa, 11 males, four females); while MPS had 18 female and 12 male respondents. It is observed the Zion Ministries Elementary urban school had more female enrolment than in the rural branch school. This could be indication of the issue of the girl-child education in the rural communities lagging behind.

Figure 13. Respondents By Gender

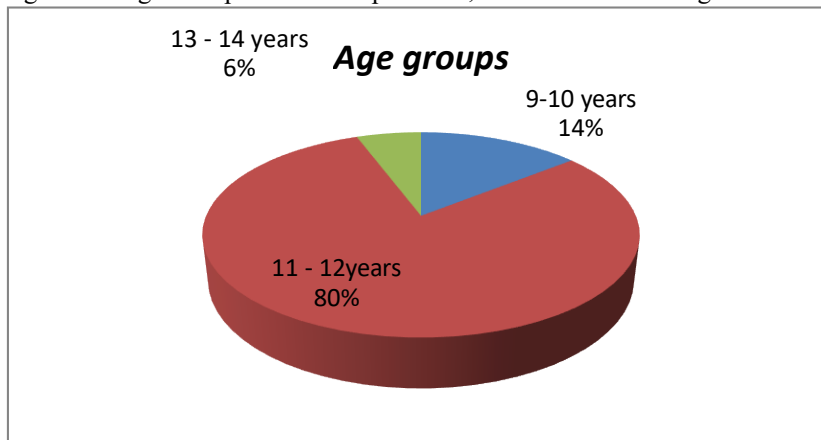


Age Group / Category of Respondents

To understand the age groups represented by the respondents, the following six groups were represented on the questionnaire: below 7 years, 7–8 years, 9–10 years, 11–12 years, 13–14 years, and above 14 years. The total number of 70 pupils investigated, 10 (14.29%) were found in the category of 9-10 years, 56 (80%) were found to be 11–12 years, while four (5.71%) were found to be 13 years and above category. In ZME School out of a total of 40 respondents, seven

were found to be in the 9–10 years category, while 30 were found in the category of 11–12 years. Three were found in the category of 13 to 14 years.

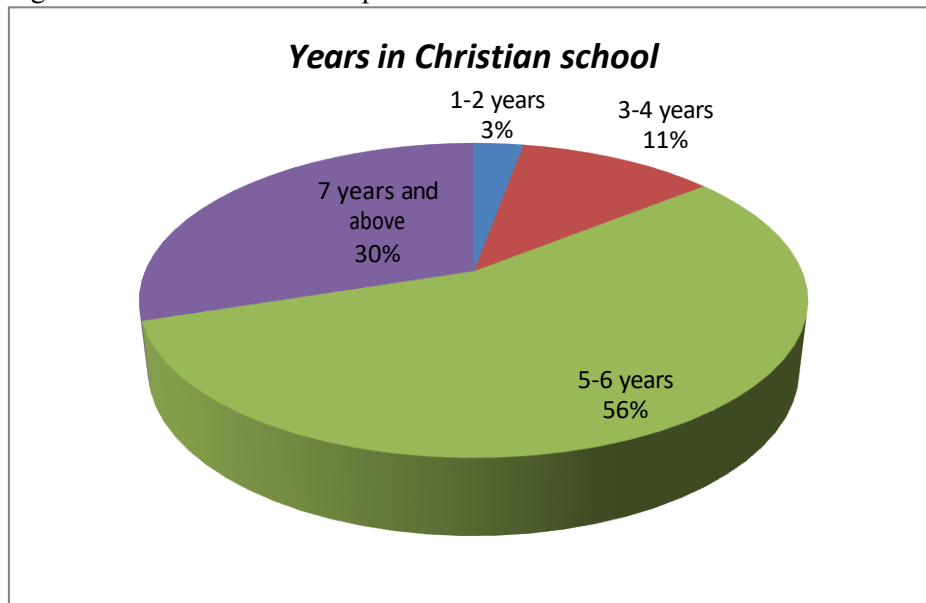
Figure 14: Age Groups of The Respondents, With Their Percentages



How Long Have You Been in This School?

To further throw light on how long each respondent had been a pupil of the Christian School were asked to select the category of the appropriate number of years spent in their respective Christian schools. It was revealed that 39 (56%) of the respondents had spent 5–6 years, 21 (30%) were seven years in their respective Christian schools, those who were 3–4 years in their school were eight in number (11%), and those who were 1–2 years old in their respective Christian schools were two (3%) of the total number of 70 respondents.

Figure 15: Number of Years Spent in This School

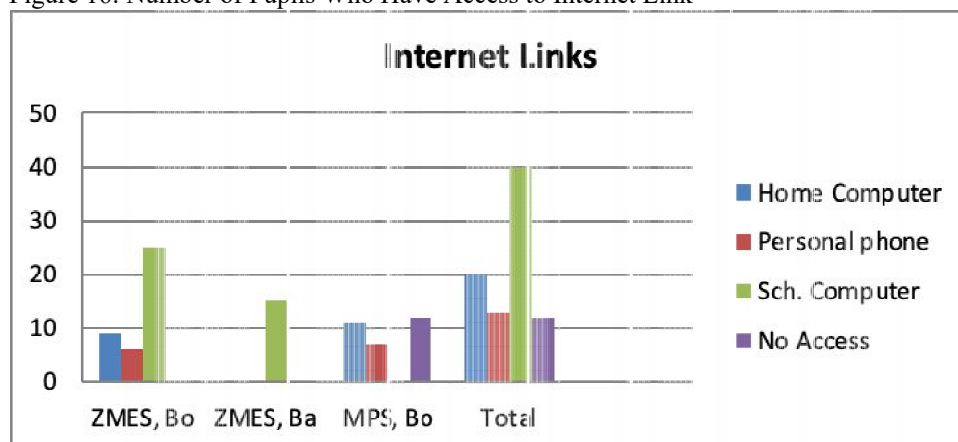


Do You Have Access to The Internet?

Considering the internet as a vital source for personal information that helps broadens one's understanding, the respondents were asked if they had access to the internet. 59 (84.28%) had access to the internet, while 11 (15.71%) did not at all have access to the internet.

When those who reported having access to the internet were asked where they do access the internet from; six reported accessing the internet through their home computers, 13 reported accessing the internet through their phones, and 40, (57.14%) of the total respondents of 70 accessed through the school computer. Apart from those who could access the internet in their homes and on personal phones, all the pupils at ZMES had access to the internet.

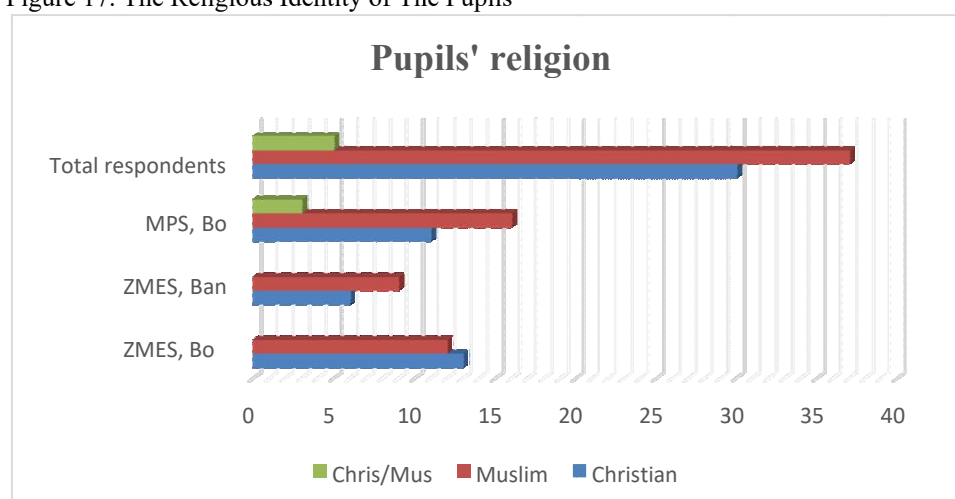
Figure 16: Number of Pupils Who Have Access to Internet Link



What Religion Do You Consider Yourself to Be?

Of the total number of 70 respondents, 35 consider themselves to be Christians and 32 considered to be Muslims, while three considered themselves as Christian and Muslims. ZMES had a total of 24 who considered themselves as Christians and 16 as Muslims. MPS had 16 who considered themselves as Muslim and 11 as Christians, while three considered themselves to be both Christian and Muslim out of the total of 30 respondents.

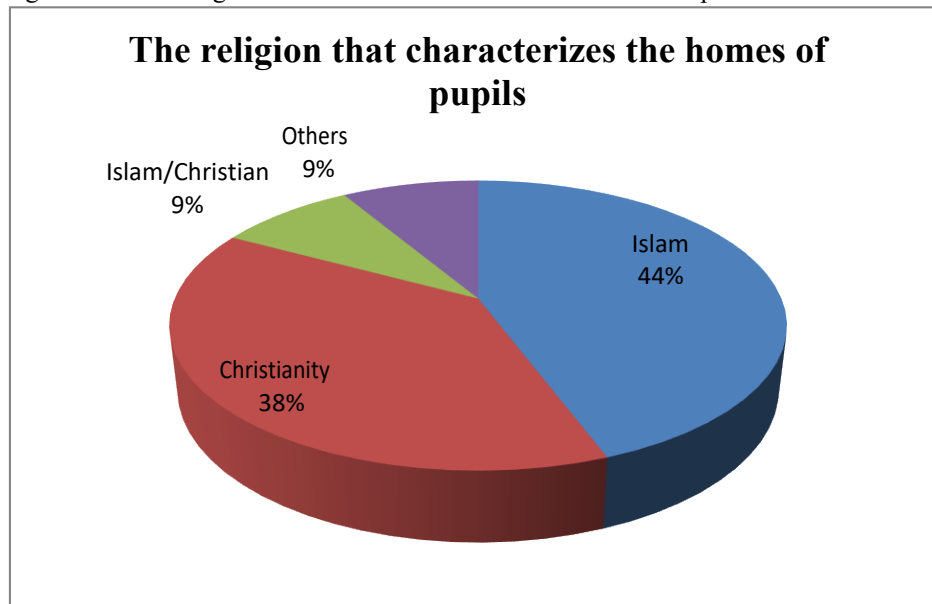
Figure 17. The Religious Identity of The Pupils



Which Religion Is Being Practiced by Your Parents/Guardians?

Of the total number of respondents of 70, 31 (44.29%) had homes characterized by Islamic home Muslim, while 27 (38.57%) characterized by Christian practices. ZME Schools 18 (45%) homes were found characterized by Christian practices and 15 (37.5%) characterized by Islamic practices, and six homes not characterized by neither Islamic practice nor Christian practices out the total of 40 respondents of the school. The Methodist primary school had far more respondents coming from Islamic background. Of a total of 30 respondents in the school, 16 had homes characterized by Islamic practices and nine characterized by Christian practices, while five homes out of the 30 respondents at the Methodist primary had recognizable presence of both Islam and Christianity.

Figure 18: The Religion That Characterizes the Homes of The Pupils

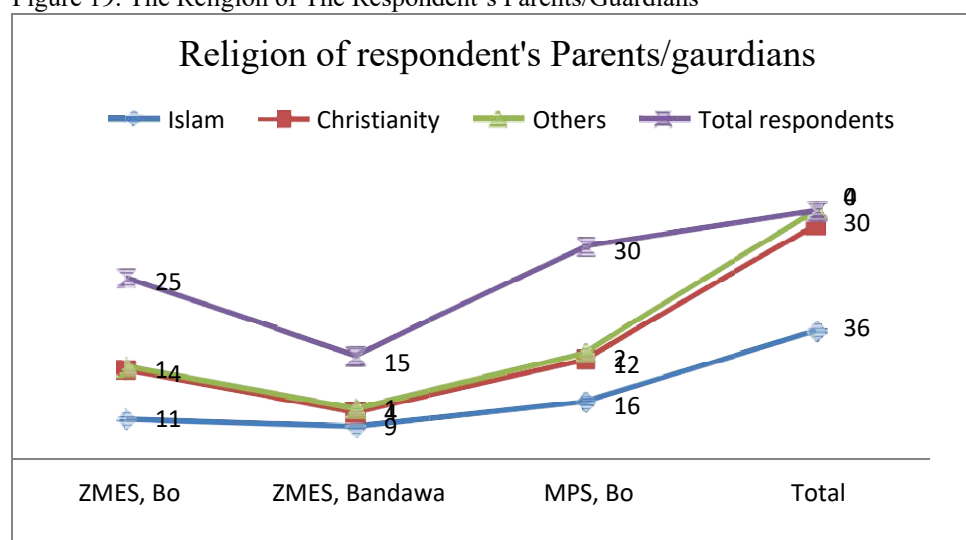


What Is the Religion of The Respondent's Parents/Guardians?

Of the total of 70 participants, 36 (51.43%) had parents/guardians were Muslims and 30 (42.86%) were found coming from Christian parent background; and four having

parents/guardians of different persuasion other than Christianity and Islam. The finding shows that there were more pupils coming from Muslim-parental background in both the old Mission school, Methodist Primary School and the Zion Ministries branch school located in a rural community. The total respondents had 36 Muslim parents and 30 from Christian-parental background. And those respondents of the branch of ZMES rural school, ratio wise, had more parents/guardians that were found to be Muslims (nine Muslim parents and four who were found to have Christian-parent), with one that belonged to the category of others. It is observed that the investigation affirms the thought that has been maintained, where in Islam seemed to be attractive to those who could not read or write.

Figure 19. The Religion of The Respondent's Parents/Guardians



Do Your Parents/Guardians Observe 40th Day Ceremony?

40th Day ceremony is largely practiced by Muslims and by some Christians in Sierra Leone. This animistic ceremony is centered on the soul of the departed. It is believed the spirit of the departed soul remains on earth relating with the living for 40 days, coming back home,

visiting places where the departed has once lived.²¹ There is, the three days, seven days and the 40th day ceremony. This Islamic tradition depicts one of its numerous animistic practices undertaken as a way of meeting felt needs. It is a ceremony that is regarded as a time the deceased truly leaves the world. It is observed as a time when Muslims send prayers to the deceased. It is also a time when a family offers prayers for assistance, guidance. They seek to satisfy or persuade their ancestors. This ceremony involves communications with the dead through divination or done directly through words from spirit possessed persons.²²

As noted by Phil Parshall, animistic practices are remnant of the idolatrous practices that existed before the conception and establishment of Islam.²³ These pagan and heretical practices persisted on the ground that the earlier Muslim missionaries held mystically influenced. Instead of strictly holding to the letter of the Islamic faith or law, they were rather in favor of accommodating and compromising their beliefs or faith. This was appealing to the converts wherein they could retain much of their old and simple practices added that what seemed good and helpful to them. This resulted in minimizing cultural and religious tensions or conflict.

To the Jews, Christians as well as the Muslims the word animism has an extremely negative connotation. It refers to corruption in general revelation instead of it referring to a specific unfolding of truth made known to a specific people. Animism appears to be a system that develops along the line of the naturalist. The animist seeks to employ a sub deity for almost every need he has. Phil Parshall defines animism among the Muslim as the syncretization of “a very basic and inadequate knowledge of Islam with a fear and worship of the unseen spiritual

21. Wilbur O'Donovan Jr., *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective* (Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1995), 222.

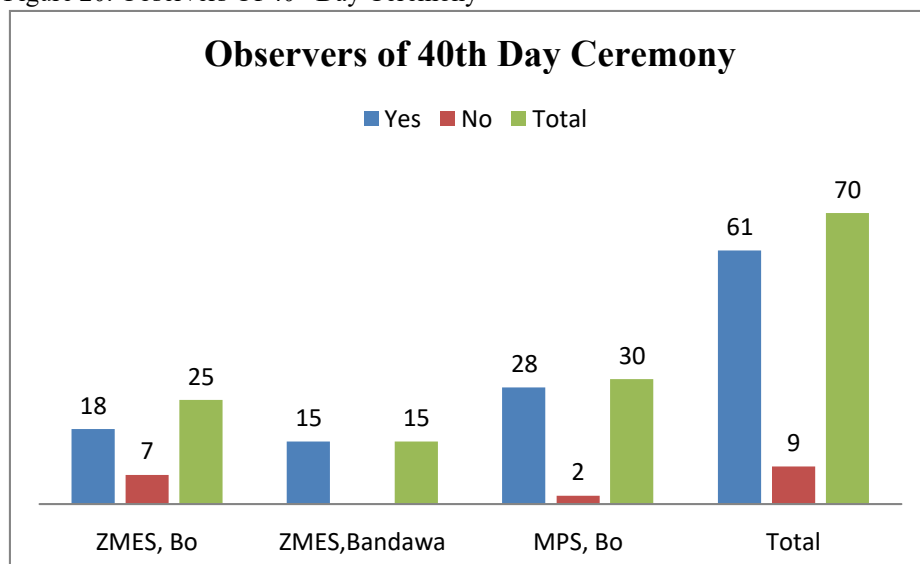
22. O'Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective*, 222.

23. Phil Parshall, *Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Folk Islam*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 72.

and naturalist forces of the cosmos,” employed to respond to their felt needs.²⁴

Responding to whether 40th Day ceremony was observed in their homes, it was surprising that that almost all were engaged in this animistic practice including most Christian homes.

Figure 20. Observers Of 40th Day Ceremony



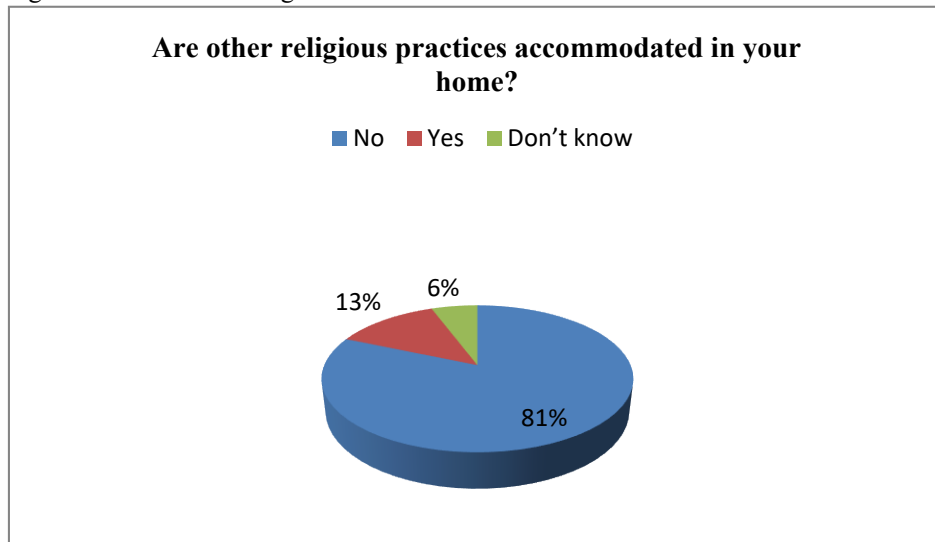
Statistically, 61 homes out of a total of 70 were found to be observers of this animistic superstition. Only 7 homes from among the ZMES and 2 from MPS, did not subscribe to that superstitious belief. All in the ZMES branch school of the rural community all were found observers of the 40th Day ceremony.

Do Your Parents/Guardians Allow Other Religious Practice in Your Home?

Seeking to understand if other religious practices were tolerated in the home of the pupils, it was discovered that 57 (81%) out of the total of 70 respondents' parents/guardians were intolerant to other religious practice apart from theirs in their homes, while nine (13%) were revealed to be tolerant and four (6%) of the pupils could not tell or predict the response of their parents/guardians to other religious practice that is different from theirs.

24. Parshall, *Bridges to Islam*, 76.

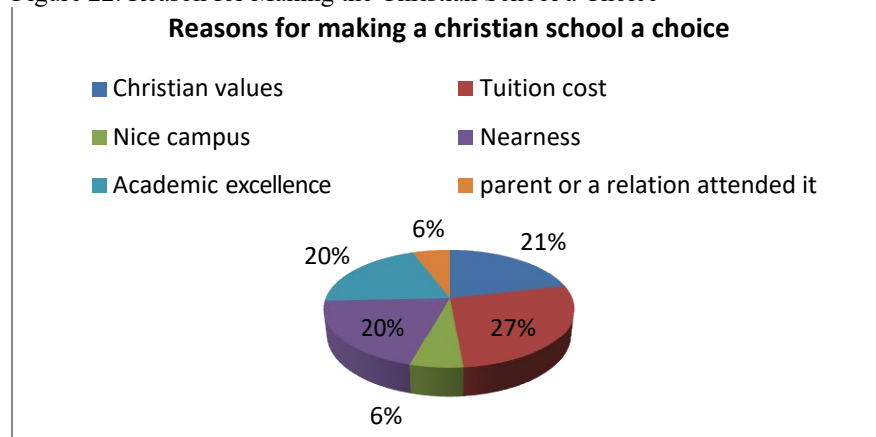
Figure 21. Are Other Religious Practices Accommodated in Your Homes?



What Do You Think Is the Most Important Reason For Your Enrolment At Your Current School?

To understand why the Christian school was made a choice for enrolment of pupils, the pupils were asked what they think was the chief reason for getting them to their current school of attendance. Finding revealed the following: Tuition cost scored 19 (27%); Christian values scored 15 (21%); nearness to the pupil's home and academic excellence equally scored 14 (20%) each, while the niceness of the campus and parents or a relative's attendance of the school in the past equally scored four (6%) each.

Figure 22. Reason for Making the Christian School a Choice



Does Anyone of Your Parents/Guardian Read and Write?

Wishing to know the educational background the respondents had, the question was posed, “Does anyone of your parents read and write English?” On the overall, 28 (40%) of the total of 70 participants responded of having parent/s /guardian/s that could read and write English, while 42 (60%) could not. Comparatively, parents/guardians in the city had more parents/guardians who could read and write English than in the rural community branch school of ZMES.

Does Your Teacher Know Our Parents/Guardians?

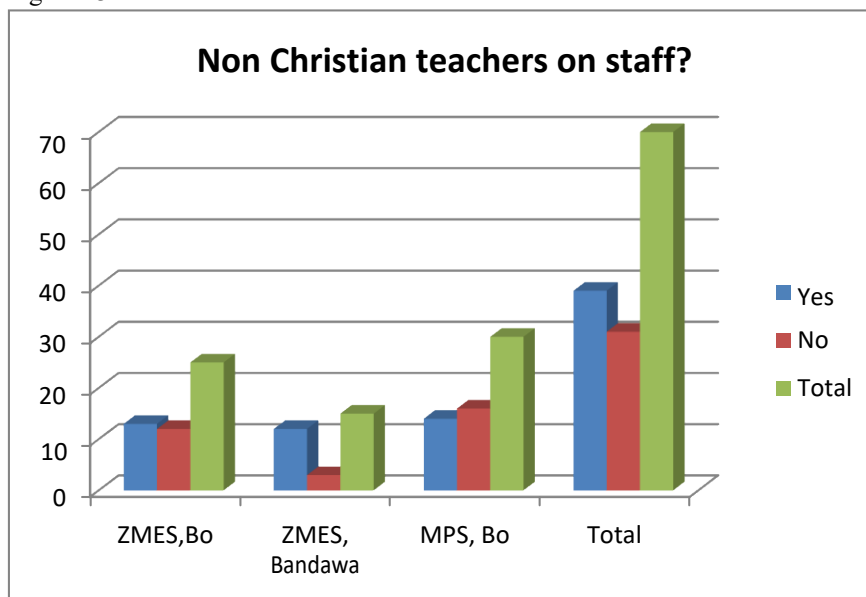
Wishing to understand whether the class teacher was somehow aware of the background or the home the pupils were coming from brought about the question, “Does your teacher know who your parents/guardians are?” Responses to this question showed that 39 (55.71%) of the respondents answered in the affirmative while 31(44.29%) responded negatively. At ZMES 25 (62.5%) responded with a “Yes” while 15 (37.5%) responded with a “No” answer out of 40 respondents. In ZMES’ rural school, the teacher was reported to know all the parents/guardians

of his/her pupils. At the MPS 14 (46.66%) acknowledged that the teacher knew their parents/guardians while 16 (53.33%) reported that their teacher does not know their parents.

Does Your School Have Non-Christian Teachers on Staff?

Existence of non-Christian staff in the Christian school, investigating who were doing the molding of the young are lives in the Christian schools, it was discovered that there is a mixture of staff influencing the lives in the Christian school. It is found that there are no teachers rendering full-time services in the Christian schools. Considering the negative impact of such combination in a Christian school and the probable reasons for such, clearly portray one of the greatest weaknesses of our Christian school.

Figure 23. Are Non-Christian Teachers on Your school's Staff?



Does Your School Have a Chaplain?

Finds concerning whether the Christian schools have chaplain and that whether they are full time staff revealed that the newer Christian school (ZMES) has, although only as part-time

staff. The older mission school (MPS) does not have. It is most needful that Christian schools have a fulltime chaplain amidst the fact that every Christian is meant a priest, discharging priestly services in his or her vocation of which the schoolteacher stands to have a more advantageous position. The chaplain is meant to provide the institution with spiritual and pastoral support to the students and staff of that institution, bearing witness and guiding the institution towards the fulfillment of its Christian purpose and distinctiveness. He does not only stand to give spiritual support but to give emotional support to pupils by providing the needed pastoral oversight and at the same time provides strategies that give the same support for the broader community.

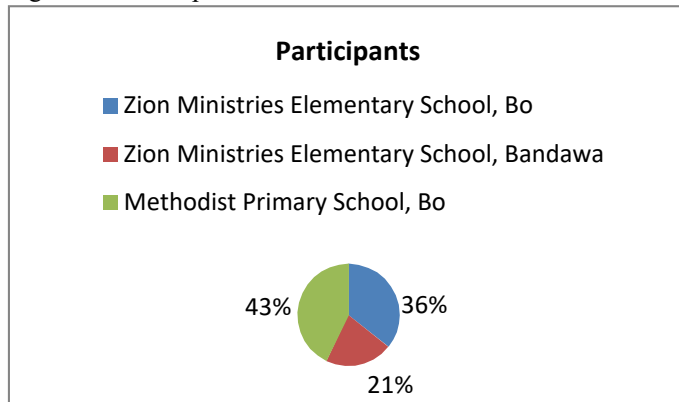
The chaplain as it is with the pastor, stands to be both theologically educated enough and a certified minister in order to be able to competently fulfill the expectations of that office, including the training of school staff in reaching the kids with the gospel. Not having a full-time staff in this area could be an indication of the fact that the administration does not regard this all-important office a priority compared to other full-time staff in the Christian school. It is even more glaring in Christian schools that do not even have this position filled even on a part-time basis as revealed in the Methodist primary school, one of the early Christian schools in the country.

The lack in this area could not singularly be lack of the importance of the role played by this office in the life of the school but could as well be caused by the Christian school's inadequate financial budget.

The Schools and Number of Participants

Participating schools and number of pupils who participated were the primary focus, Zion Ministries Elementary School, Bo which had 25 (36%) participants and its branch school which had 15 (21%) participants; and 30 (43%) participants from the Methodist Primary school, Bo, making a total of 70 respondents.

Figure 24. Participants



CHAPTER FIVE

EVALUATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents an evaluation of the research findings, some practical ways and strategies including the use of gospel devotionals to successfully reach preteens in a Christian school. In this section the important findings of the survey are analyzed and interpreted to identify the problems why kids go through Zion Ministries Elementary School with little or no positive impact of the gospel. The researcher gathered data through a survey questionnaire that was divided into two sections. The first section approached the target pupils with 12 questions on a 5 points Likert scale seeking to test how the teachings of the gospel appealed to the cognitive, emotional and behavior of the child. The first part in the first section of the questionnaire, the researcher approached the respondents with questions related to their understanding or knowledge of the gospel message. Secondly, the respondents were faced with questions related to how they were emotionally touched by the gospel message they were taught; and thirdly, it was to understand how the respondents acted the gospel message they heard. The second section of the questionnaire, the researcher approached the respondents with questions related to personal data such as age, sex, religious faith, religious practices that characterized the home; and information about their school.

Major Survey Findings

Evangelistic Opportunity Exists

According to the survey, the presence of Preteens including Muslims kids formed the bulk of the population found in the 6th grade of the Christian schools investigated. Statistics show

that over 80% of the preteen were found to be in their final year in primary school, and over 56% of them have spent on average, more than five years in the Christian School. It is discovered on average, the two sample schools comprised of total respondents of 70, of which 44.29% of the kids came from Muslim home; 38.57% from Christian homes, 8.57% having homes characterized as both Muslim and Christian homes; and 8.75% representing others. 45.71% of the total respondents from both schools personally considered themselves to be Muslims, while 50% considered themselves to be Christians. This showed the existence of evangelistic opportunities within the Christian schools.

According to the World Population Review, 78.6% of the country's population are Muslims and largely comprised of Sunni Muslims.¹ Most of the Mosque and the Islamic schools across the country do claim to belong to Sunni Islam. Most of the ethnic groups including the Mende tribe who are the majority occupants of Bo district, where the schools investigated are located belong to this sect of Muslims. They practice a mixed form of Sunni Islam that includes cultural and animistic practices. This sort of Islam commonly referred as folk Islam, the popular form of Islam mixes the orthodox practices with mystical superstitions, animism and traditional practices.²

By observation and by experience, these Muslims are found posing belief in sorcery spirits, traditional herbalists or local religious heads and other forms of mediums. For example, to know the causes of certain occurrences like crop failure, sicknesses, and sudden death and also to wade off ill-luck, evil eye, demons, witches and wizards they resort to consulting mediums. This type of Islam practices polygamy and traditional African religions. The simplicity about the

1. "Muslim Population by Country 2022," World Population Review, accessed November 19, 2022, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/muslim-population-by-country>.

2. Phil Parshall, *Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Folk Islam* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 16.

practices of this religious belief and mode of worship make Islam more attractive, especially to the illiterate folks. They claim Islam with little or no Quranic understanding. These followers sometimes are observed to be fanatics; however, the Christian witness that has some knowledge about Islam increases the possibility of reaching them for Christ.

There is apparent evidence of Muslim pupils being indoctrinated exists from the research findings. The research tends to lend support to the popular statement, the child of the Muslim is automatically a Muslim; hence children are noted to solely belong to the father's clan.³ It is indicative from the research that pupils' religious faith is based on their parental heritage. During the growing years of these children, they are indoctrinated with the parents' belief and religious practices. They grow with both the sense of the outward and inside practice of Islam which the outsider is often not aware of.

Questions aimed at testing the understanding of key Christian doctrines were observed to be responded to base on their religious positions or heritage. Answers received concerning the doctrine of God, the Word of God, and of salvation, largely portrayed the religious belief held by the respondents. The survey indicated the existences of religious intolerance. Responses to question aimed at knowing how tolerant or accommodative Islam is with regards other faiths, especially the Christian faith, clearly affirmed their intolerance. It was revealed that a greater percentage (81.43%) of parents/guardians did not welcome other religious practice in their homes, yet the country has paradoxically been noted for its religious tolerance. It is noted, "Sierra Leone is regarded as one of the most tolerant countries in the world. Muslims and Christians collaborate and interact with each other peacefully. Religious violence is very rare in the country. Even during the country's Civil war people were never targeted because of their

3. Clive Beestand "Islam's Patriarchal Clan System," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (October 2004): 435.

religion.”⁴ In Sierra Leone these two religions come together to work for peace and development. The Inter-Religious council exists for that purpose. With the existence of religious tolerance coupled with the local Muslims seeking ways to address their felt needs through spiritual objects and the spirits gives clue to somehow understand who they are and how to better respond to the needs of these pupils coming from such background heritage.

It is also traced from the survey that majority of those parents identified as Christian are noted to be nominal in their Christian beliefs and practices. Of the total of 70 respondents, 27 (38.57%) were noted coming from Christian homes. Investigation to note how orthodox the parents of the respondents were, respondents were asked if their parents/guardians observed 40th day Ceremony. This is a traditional religious practice or a form of animistic practice that involves communications with the dead. It was disturbing to note that only nine (12.86%) indicated nonobservance of this animistic practice. It is clear that large number of the Christians subscribe to this unorthodox practice together with those of the Muslims. As it stands, the environment the child is raised goes to shape his/her beliefs. This is an indication of the children of even the Christian families do stand in need of wholesome Christian environment, which fosters or enhances their spiritual growth based on biblical Christianity.

Weak Evangelistic Instrument—The Christian School

Confirming the existence of the strategic evangelistic opportunity urges toward seeking for the best and most appropriate practices the Christian school could utilize in order to serve as a successful evangelistic instrument. From the research, taking into consideration what the Christian school really stands to be—an arm of the church which is meant to influence its

4. “Religion in Sierra Leone,” accessed November 19, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Sierra_Leone

constituents towards the salvation and the spiritual development of its pupils—is observed to have a weak presence; it falls short in its viability in fulfilling the evangelistic purpose of the Christian school. The result of the research does show the Christian School being ill-equipped to impact its pupils for Christ.

It Has a Weak Evangelistic Presence

Despite the fact that Zion Ministries Elementary School's engagement of having daily Christian prayer, the bible read at its devotion services once a week, sing Christian songs and do undertake other Christian features besides a written purpose of the school's existence, it does stand in want of maximizing its gospel presence for maximum Christian impact. The Christian school's sense of purpose seemed to have very little or no effect in the running of the school. It is almost like the old Christian Mission Schools represented by one of its primary schools. Whereas Zion Ministries Elementary School, comparatively a newer Christian school born out of the passion of seeing a revived Christian schools in the country seems to have a moderate outcome of its evangelistic pursuit with a very minimal amount of Christian influence exerted upon its pupils. This Christian school which is meant to be an evangelistic instrument is observed to have weak Christian presence and also weak at its proclamation of the gospel message. This is largely attributed to the weak purpose of existence; and as such, there is no strong and consistent intentional agenda of having pupils saved and nurtured as presented by its mission purpose.

The Christian school, like any Christian family is meant to be positioned to welcome children and nurture them in the best possible way. Each child coming into the family joins the existing members. The person joins those who had earlier on come into that family, with the parents bearing total responsibility of setting a conducive environment for healthy growth. In the

primary School setting in Sierra Leone, the class teacher stands to be that head of the class. And the one that spent the longest hours each day with kids of his class. In this regard, the position of the teacher, like the parent becomes very much crucial in setting the climate and the fostering of the family values. From the findings, it is revealed, there is lack of wholesome Christian staff presence in the Christian school to pursue its Great Commission mandates. There are non-Christian teachers on staff including Muslim class teachers serving in the Christian school. Christian presence is reflected by only those who have the Spirit of Christ. This only revolves around those that have Christ. This Christian atmosphere is largely governed in the Christian home by the parents. Likewise, the Christian teacher sets the climate or the environment through the Spirit of Christ in this class.

Over 87% of the respondents agreed on the question investigating whether there are nonbelievers serving as teachers in the Christian school. This gives an indication of recruitment of staff being too relaxed to the extent of recruiting unbelievers; making the purpose of existence of the school if any, to become a mere theoretical exercise. This weakness is reflective by the lack of stringent policies that should go to maintaining the institution's purpose of being.

One of the Christian school's main objectives is to serve as a fruitful soil for effective personal witnessing. The Zion Ministries Elementary school exists with the objective of granting access and training to all who desire enrolment, regardless the creed or religious persuasion. It is believed once enrolled in this faith community, it is expected that the pupil becomes either consciously or unconsciously exposed to the Christian influence of ministry, prayer and worship. This exposure is believed with time, helps pupils consider making commitment to the newfound faith as expressed in the school or at least acquire new knowledge for investigation either at the present or at a later time. This approach aligns with the Celtic way of evangelism; unlike the

Roman approach, the presentation of the message came first, followed by the invitation to decide for Christ and then become a member of the fellowship or the community of faith.⁵ Hunter elaborating on this draws attention to Finney's citation of Professor Robbin Gill's general observation concerning most people, 'belonging comes before believing' for this reason, evangelism is now about 'helping people to belong so that they can believe.'⁶

Biblical Standards for Hiring Staff, Especially for Teachers

To secure quality personnel for the school and to uphold the same that subscribes to the philosophy of the school do call for the making of detailed policies that could help guide in the decision-making process of recruitment. This policy should include general expectations, expectations for non-professionals, expectations for professionals and that of administrators. Main standards for hiring should foremost be based on the spirituality, and then, the academic and the government regulations regarding employment.

Spiritual and Academic Qualifications

With regard to the spiritual qualification for Christian school employee, uncompromisingly every employee should be born again and must be able to testify of his salvation orally and practically. Teachers and other professionals must be in place to give evidence in writing and in personal interview give the assurance that they are Bible believing and practicing. Until convincing evidence of the applicant's faith in Christ he should not be employed. To confirm the claim of the applicant, the applicant must be able to give proof of

5. George G. Hunter III, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity can reach the West....Again*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 55.

6. Hunter, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism*, 55.

being an active member in a church that is Bible believing. Beside the applicant should be a practicing evangelical. To avoid future misunderstanding, it should be best to have the applicant read the school's policy on staff pointing out the loyalty and support of the school's policies.

Among other pertinent qualifications, the Christian teacher should have is that of possessing a Christ-like disposition for service, a servant heart (Matthew 20:27). Each employee in the school has the capacity of influencing the overall testimony of the school either for good or for bad. It is therefore wise to wait until the right personnel is gotten than to employ one that does not subscribe to the school's policy. As Devink puts it, "It is better that an academic area suffers temporarily, than that of the spiritual objectives of the institution be compromised."⁷ The Christian school is as much a ministry to the Lord as does the church, there for its personnel must possess the same spiritual qualifications as the church leaders (1 Timothy 3:1-3).

Current findings revealed the fact of staff holding diverse religious positions serving in the Christian schools. Recruitment apparently is mainly based on academic qualification without much reference placed on spiritual qualifications that would enable one to serve in the Christian institution. There are Muslims serving as staff members and some holding administrative positions with the Christian institution. The following are among reasons why the original intent of the existence of the Christian school has become passive and, in most cases become obsolete. The following could be the contributory factors for the compromise in the recruitment of teachers that are not Christians in the Christian school:

1. Most Christian Schools because of lack of sufficient private financial support to manage the school resolve to accepting any volunteer who opts to render free or lesser

7. James W. Deuink and Carl D. Herbster, *Effective Christian School Management* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones Univ. Press, 1982), 102.

salary for their teaching services hence qualified academically regardless his/her religious belief

2. Because of the same lack, most Christian schools that apply for government's support which automatically waves the right of recruiting only Christians. State financial support by legislation, is meant to indiscriminately offer equal chances of employment. This has made teachers who are not Christians are found teaching in these schools.

3. Some schools appear to have just totally lost the original purpose for which the school came into existence. They do suffer from the S shaped curve effect; succumbing to the natural law of decay and decline.⁸

It's quite impossible to give what one does not have. The non-Christian teacher cannot influence pupils towards accepting and growing in Him. Edward quotes four components of learning that correlate with the teacher's behavior: his motivation, perception, response and reinforcement.⁹ The pupil's motivation mirrors the teacher's attitude and enthusiasm and appreciation for the subject. It is stated, "Perception occurs best when the teacher provides a clear-cues to focus attention on significant idea and match methods to content, providing students with opportunity for interactive response over the material, with both teacher and with peers improve retention, as does the teacher's skill in reinforcing and affirming so that achievement becomes pleasurable."¹⁰

It is imperative that the Christian school coming into existence should be based on a clear cut and forceful purpose of its existence. The first and foremost fundamental issue a

8. Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for church and Ministry Leaders*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 10, 11.

9. David L. Edwards. "Designing Biblical Instruction," in *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Teaching*, ed. Kenneth O. Gangel and Howard G. Hendricks (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 55.

10. Edwards, "Designing Biblical Instruction," 55.

Christian school's administrator and its board must address are the mission statement, vision statement, goals and objectives, core values and objectives, and philosophy of the school; these establish the purpose and direction for the school which do serve as the underlying values by which the school operate. The school's leadership team and administrative structure evaluates all the aspects of the school based on these preliminaries. They shape the curriculum and set the standards for the pupil's outcome. The school's facilities, faculty, and finances are all shaped to enable institutional to fulfill these statements and the continual maturing of the school. The purpose statement serves as the hub around which everything about the school evolves.¹¹

An Overall Purpose of a Christian School

Choosing Christian school as a means of fulfilling the Great Commission calls the overall purpose of that school to be found in teaching the word of God. The school must seek to provide a comprehensive education for its pupils through an academic program of study in a context of a Christian world view. Central to such learning process is the integration of both faith and academics that offers salvation and encourages spiritual formation and growth shown by the development of a Christian mind and godly character. Lowrie list the following six requirements that do make a real Christian school:

1. The Christian institution must be built on a thorough ongoing Christian philosophy of education
2. The school should have a faculty that understands and is truly committed to the philosophy of the school.
3. It should have a Christ honoring and centered institution.

11. Roy W. Lowrie Jr., *Administration of the Christian School* (Whitter, CA: Association of Christian Schools International, 1984), 12.

4. The school must have pupils that are committed and are actively led to support the philosophy of the school
5. The school should recognize the two aspects of Christian education which is the required and that which is voluntary.
6. The school must apply Christian ethics in all its relationships.¹²

The unsaved administrator and staff leading in Christian schools provide opposing signals as they are unable to represent what the Christian school should be to the pupils and to the public. Until the messengers/teachers are saved, they have special call to Christian ministry and do have legitimate or wholesome passion for the lost; they cannot be appropriate candidates in a ministry school.

It is worth mentioning some cautions about opening the Christian school with evangelical purpose. Opening the Christian school to accommodate kids from non-Christian homes must go with the following guidelines: Firstly, the administration must make the purpose or the mission statement of the school very explicit from the onset to the understanding of every parent. Secondly make policies clearly as possible. Get it printed and shared before admission. Thirdly do some background checks, screening before admitting each pupil. Fourthly make sure spiritual positions are reserved for those who could subscribe to the mission of the school. And fifthly, make sure a non-believer should not hold a teaching position at least in a Christian primary school.

It Has Weak Gospel Teaching Program

Preaching and teaching occupied the most prominent place in the evangelistic and discipleship program of the Jesus and the apostles. The Apostles sought for opportunities to

12. Lowrie, *Administration of the Christian School*, 23.

declare the word. In agreement with Michael Green in his book, *Evangelism in the Early Church* preaching was the most prominent modes of evangelism used by the early church.¹³ It was apparent, that where so ever a crowd gathered, an opportunity was looked for to have the gospel proclaimed. Dr. Coleman do holds that such became the platform for the preaching of the gospel than their sacred places of gathering; and that more sermons recorded in nonreligious settings, as in non-religious places or groupings.¹⁴

Added to the indication of the Christian school's weakness of having some of its teaching personnel who are not qualified to subscribe to the discipleship making mandate of the institution, also present another indication of an obvious weakness with regards to its proclamation of the gospel message. If the teacher must have a fulfilling teaching ministry, he/she must have the obligation of appealing to the three major domains of man's personality. The teacher has the responsibility to make effective appeal in these three major dimensions of the pupils' lives: the cognitive, the affective and the behavioral. A true life -change is not possible until the whole person in influenced in all three domains.¹⁵ These taxonomies are noted to be hierarchical classification system with series of sequential levels in which the objectives can be categorized.¹⁶ Deficiency in any of these domain results in an unbalanced and a faulty presentation of the gospel message which affects the positive spiritual growth of the pupils. The intellect must be enlightened. This is done as the facts of the Word of God is logically and clearly made known. The emotion must be stirred. This is brought about the pupil reacts to the

13. Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 194-207.

14. Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revel, 1998), 73.

15. John Dettoni, "On Being a Developmental Teacher," in *Nurture that is Christian: Developmental Perspective on Christian Education*, ed. James C. Wilhoit and John M. Dettoni (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1995), 255.

16. Donald C. Orlich, Robert J. Harder, Michael S. Trevisan, Abbie H. Brown, Darcy E. Miller, eds. *Teaching Strategies: A Guide to Better Instruction* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1985), 118.

facts that is presented to him/her. And thirdly the pupil's will must be brought to the point and act of decision. This is accomplished as the pupil is convinced of the facts and emotionally stirred in favor of the gospel message.

Investigations into the doctrinal positions held by respondents on bibliology, theology and salvation largely showed positions that are either un-Christian or unorthodox. Answers apparently depicted background orientations portraying Islamic or nominal backgrounds of respondents. Furthermore, doctrinal investigations concerning the means of salvation, the following statement was made: *Ones good deeds save him/her from God's punishment*. It is intriguing to have a moderate result on the overall. Twenty-nine (41.43%) of the respondents agreed to been saved by one's works together with four (5.71%) strongly agreed to that statement.

Answers to the above doctrines are indicative of the large numbers who are entirely opposed or in partial agreement of major orthodox Christian doctrines. Concerning the belief about the Word of God, large number of respondents indicated their oppositions, or a partial believe in the Bible as the true Word of God. As such, it is indicative that there is no solid ground for faith and practice, no wonder the distorted perception or the low view of the Bible. This eventually leads to having a corollary impact on the understanding and acceptance of the other biblical doctrines. Right or sound doctrine affects one's action, or indicative of an extension of his/her perceived theology. There is a direct correlation between what one thinks and how he/she acts.

Again, it is obvious that only the right instruments can be able to assume the proclamation of the gospel in order to get a positive or purposeful outcome on the proclamation of the gospel message. Mere formal and unmotivated teaching cannot fulfill the Christian

objective. By observation, it is a common sight in some Christian schools not only granting access to be officially enlisted as a teacher though not believers in Christ but to have non-Christian teachers lead gospel devotion services in the Christian schools simply because that non-Christian teacher has a diploma in Christian religious studies, gained at the secular university. From statistics, ratings regarding each of the statements geared towards the investigation of how the gospel proclaimed in the Christian school appeals to the cognitive domain of respondents show responses that are moderate as investigations on the other domains further show.

Seeking to understand the view maintained about the mission of Satan by respondents, the following statement was made: *Satan tempts God's people to sin*. 72.85% respondents agreed with the statement. There was majority agreement on this statement. The variation on the understanding of the gospel message was found along religious beliefs that reflect the respondents' backgrounds. This appeared to be reflective of the indoctrination the growing-up child received from the parental background.

As specified above, these stated lack or deficiencies to fully appeal to the cognitive and affective domains in the teaching ministry in the Christian school contribute to the weak quality of teaching of the gospel in the Christian school. Findings on the cognitive aspect rendered a verbal interpretation of neutrality. As such, the cognitive needs of the pupils were not quite satisfied and therefore could not lead them to make decision for Christ.

Next to helping audience think rightly by been taught the correct biblical doctrines is to stir or touch the pupils with the lessons taught. Investigation along this line also revealed a lack in being able to positively stir the emotion of the audience in the right or desired direction. The overall investigation of how affective the teaching of the gospel in the Christian school indicated

to be moderately low, a neutral response. Pupils remain unmoved by the teachings of the gospel message; not affected by the gospel message. Probing into why the gospel teachings were boring and did not appear all-that attractive could be attributed to one or more of the following factors: the lessons were not quite applicable to the class and a lacked understanding of the target group. Besides, pupils were not sure of being loved by their teachers and the lack of varied teaching methods.

The next statement that followed was the inquiry into whether the needs of the kids were ministered to by the teaching of the gospel. It was directed to understand whether the teacher knew his pupils and do know when their pupils were in need. Besides, another statement that followed, sought to understand whether the *teacher always commended pupils for good performance openly*. Four statements were posted on the Likert scale to understand how affective the teachings were at the Christian school. All the statements in this regard received answers of neutrality. They were neither effective nor ineffective with an overall sectional verbal interpretation of being moderately high and a mean of 3.25.

There are several factors a transformational teacher needs to consider in order to cultivate the interest of the preteens from being bored with the lesson he/she teaches. The following considerations could be tremendously helpful in this regard: Customize the curriculum and lessons by taking the specific community and the target persons' real-life situations into account. Kids love fun; therefore, one should seek to incorporate fun into the lesson in order to sustain the interest of the kids. Ask a lot of questions as preteens learn a whole lot by discussing questions regarding life. Seek to have the lessons be relevant to their world. Include the use of the media as it is a powerful tool to capture the attention and interest of the kids. The teacher must use active learning, not static. The use of variety of teaching methods also helps to maintain the interest of

the child. Get the kids to feel the teacher's passion and energy; and make sure he/she has prepared quite well to teach.

Added to the several factors that go to make an interesting class is that of knowing the pupils themselves. It is of utmost importance that the teacher understands the background knowledge of the target group's religious and other specific needs that pertains the pupils. Not familiarizing oneself with the background of the target group contributed to rendering a weak position of the Christian school in fulfilling its mission obligation. Thirty-six (51.42%) of the respondents' indicated that their teacher did not know who the students' parents were. It means, more than half of the pupils' home background, where they were coming from was not known by their teacher. It is true that one's need is never appropriately met until you know who the person is and the background orientation that makes who that person is. These felt needs are recognized as the entry points for change. Felt needs or perceived needs of pupils serve as windows of opportunity that could bring about a change in the pupil's life.¹⁷ Matheny defines felt needs as the state of dissatisfaction that sets in when a person need or desire outweighs his actualities caused by the tension in the psychological field that longs for readjustment.¹⁸ The reason for locating the felt needs in a people or societies is quite vital, for the fact that innovations based on felt needs do have good potential of gaining acceptance.¹⁹ Larry Richards has well stated,

For primaries, teaching should relate to the children's present needs and experiences. The goal in bible teaching is not first of all to instill ideas that students will need to know 'someday.' The goal is to bring pupils into vital relationship with God today. Teaching

17. Howard G. Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1987), 127-30.

18. Tim Matheny, *Reaching the Arabs: A Felt Need Approach* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1952), 140.

19. Matheny, *Reaching the Arabs*, 142.

must be structured to help children make their own discoveries and respond to God on their own level.²⁰

Following the enquiry about the teacher's love for his/her pupils, was the statement that sought to understand whether kids were openly commended for good performances. Only thirteen of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement. The overall showed to be neutral with a mean of 3.38%. This result shows that commendation has not been seen or recognized as vital ingredient in the teaching and learning process of the Christian school. Commendation or praise is capable of changing negative belief held by the pupil about himself or herself. It makes the child feel respected, resilient and proud. It helps the pupil to cope with failures, encourage learning, increase and challenges their effort to learn. It makes the child more motivated to keep trying and to ask for help. This act of commendation could be done through the following common means: praising the pupil in class by making positive remarks about a pupil or the entire class. It can be just a tiny phrase or a form of rewarding the pupil for his/her effort of good work or by verbal applaud in class. These commendations could be reinforced by making an eye contact, move towards the pupil, give the pupil a smile, or a pat on the back, etc. The teacher should not praise and criticize at the same time. Giving appropriate commendation becomes an open door for the child's success.

Seeking to understand the affection and the love the teacher has towards his/her kids posed a statement as to whether the teacher was so affectionate enough to hug his/her pupils. The findings on this revealed uncertainty about the practice. It can never be over emphasized, except for the Covid-19 situation or the like; if the teacher should touch the kids to whom he/she communicates the gospel. It is not unusual for a nursery or elementary school teacher to hug a pupil to make that child feel safe, reduce stress and to convey appreciation and love. It's a

20. Larry Richards and Lin Johnson, "Planning for Teaching and Learning," in *Christian Education Foundations for the future*, ed. Robert E. Clark, Lin Johnson, and Allyn K. Sloat (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 177.

proven fact that a hug contributes to the development and well-being of the child. It is noted that hug produces hormones that help people feel good and less stress and anxious. Hugs can also help alleviate fears in the child, especially one with low self-esteem. Hugs make people feel connected and it eradicates the thought of not being wanted. Hugs can be used as a nonverbal act or a form of communication the pupil can use to express his/her emotions of anger, fear, love, gratitude, happiness, sadness and sympathy. It is noted that hugs can also increase good behavior in a child and increased school attendance.

Although this practice is beneficial, as the child grows this type of contact becomes a sensitive practice that should be done discreetly. Though hugging has such tremendous benefit, it must be expressed with caution in order not to be misinterpreted wrongly with regard the opposite sex especially with regards to Muslims. The following can act as a guide for hugging a child: It is safe to have the pupil initiate the hugging and that the hugging should be situational, practiced, for example when the child is going through difficult times to show sympathy or done as a way of congratulating a child; and as the health regulation permits.

Loving the kids is a powerful force of attraction. One wants to be where he or she is valued or loved. Love for God must be demonstrative by the love the teacher has for the kids. When the kids feel or sense love from the teacher it acts as a magnet that draws them towards the teacher. The gospel message must be rooted in the demonstration of God's love if it should affect lives. Dr. Robert Coleman, Dr. Timothy Beougher, and Dr. John Mallison among other evangelicals, agree to the fact that every act of successful evangelism must first of all be rooted in the demonstration of God's love, the incarnation.²¹ The gospel without the person remains an

21. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship*, 10, 11; Timothy Beougher, *Overcoming Walls to Witnessing* (Charlotte, NC: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1993), 19; John Mallison, *Mentoring to Develop Disciples and Leaders, Scripture* (Union: Open Book Publishers, 1998), 26.

abstract theory.²² The gospel is the expression of love realized in the person of Jesus Christ. It is through the incarnation Jesus became servant to all and also reveals God and His missionary zeal. During His few years on earth, Christ took upon himself our identity and demonstrated in our world who God is and how much he cares. Everything he said and did was controlled by His mission. “The Son of man did not come to be served but to serve” (Matthew 20:28) and to finally wrapped up all our sins in His own body and bore them to the cross (1 Peter 2:24). The gospel is therefore an expression of God’s personal love; it is not and will never become an abstract theory or mere mechanical program.²³

The entire life and ministry of Christ was a personification of God’s unconditional love. His incarnation should therefore intersect the life of the disciple of Christ which becomes the foundation that undergirds his/her entire Christian ministry if he/she would become an effective witness. Evangelism being the natural expression of the church, every believer is expected to be a personal demonstration of the gospel, “known and read by all men” (2 Corinthians 3:2-3).²⁴ To make the reflection of his life saving mission more vivid Jesus told his disciples, “As the father has sent me into the world so am I sending you” (John 18:18; 20:21). In this regard believers are meant to be the natural reflection of the Body of Christ. Tim rightly states, “When people have experienced the redeeming love of God for themselves, they have something to share.”²⁵

True love always goes along with the demonstration of compassion. It is generally held by evangelical scholars, that the effective personal witnessing is not only founded on

22. Coleman, *The Master’s Way of Personal Evangelism*, 10, 11.

23. Coleman, *The Master’s Way of personal Evangelism*, 10, 11, 143, 144.

24. Coleman, *The Master’s Way of personal Evangelism*, 11.

25. Beougher, *Overcoming Walls to Witnessing*, 19.

relationships but must also be rooted in compassion for the lost.²⁶ The lost people are not to be seen as the enemy but rather victims of the enemy.²⁷ Quoting Douglas Stewart, Dr. Timothy Beougher notes the lack of possessing the compassion of Christ as the one reason for failure to witness.²⁸

To cultivate burden for the lost, an antidote for callousness of heart towards the lost, Dr Timothy Beougher recommends falling on one's face from time to time before God and crying out from a heart of compassion for the unsaved.²⁹ He further challenges with words from D.L. Moody, Arthur C. Archibald, Douglas Steward, John Henry Jowett on the importance of having a burden for the lost.³⁰ It is true if one would be an effective in witness he should minister out of the burden for the lost.

Lacks Noticeable Sign of Gospel Impact

Being that there is failure in the gospel teaching rightly and clearly appealing to the cognitive and the affection of the kids, resulted in the lack of positive impact. A change is rarely observed in the lives of the kids that could be attributed to the Christian influence and teachings. The third area of investigation was to see how the gospel preached at the school as a whole impacted the lives of the pupils that went through it for the past several years (an average of 5 years' period at least) to see the extent decisions were made in favor of Christ. Statistical discovery on this were quite disturbing. There was a remarkable failure to impact the kids. The

26. Timothy Beougher, "The Personal Life of the Effective Witness," in *Fulfilling the Great Commission in The Twenty-First Century*, ed. Lyle W. Dorsett and Ajith Fernando (Franklin, TN: Seedbed, 2015), 44,45.

27. Beougher, "The Personal Life of the Effective Witness,"46.

28. Beougher, "The Personal Life of the Effective Witness,"47.

29. Beougher, "The Personal Life of the Effective Witness,"47.

30. Beougher, *Overcoming Walls to Witnessing*, 28.

kids spent considerable number of years in the school without been seriously impacted with the gospel presence (environment) and proclamation that could make them make decision to accept and to follow Jesus Christ. It is revealed from the findings, at least 21 (30%) had spent 7 years and 39 (56%) had spent least 5 – 6 years in their respective Christian schools. Statistically there is very low impact made on the lives of the pupils as portrayed by the four last statements posted on the Likert scale questionnaire geared toward accessing the will power to take action on what they knew and felt proved to be quite low. The overall impact of the gospel knowledge and how affective it had been registered a means of 2.77.

The current level of understanding of the gospel message was not strong enough to help the pupils to see the need of accepting Jesus as Savior. Based on the findings on the following statement, *Because of the Christian school I attend, I have been urged to accept Jesus as my Savior*. The answer to the preceding statement showed to be moderate (2.68%).

Persuasion Seemed to Be Lacking

More than half of the total enrolment in the sixth grade (Class 6) the final year in primary school 56% had spent 5–6 years while 30% had spent 7 years and above in the Christian school without been persuaded to accepting Jesus as savior. Stephen E. Lucas generally defines persuasion as “the process of creating, reinforcing, or changing people’s beliefs or actions.”³¹ Evangelistically, according to Robert Logan persuasion is “simply the twist that causes the ripe fruit to fall into the bag.”³² When a fruit is fully ripe, it requires very little or no twist. The writer defines persuasion evangelism as the integration of both presence and proclamation evangelism

31. Stephen E. Lucas, *The Art of Public Speaking*, 12th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2015), 134.

32. Robert Logan, *Beyond Church Growth: Action Plan for Developing a Dynamic Church* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1989), 106.

based on the strong sense of purpose of the propagator, his/her credibility, the evidence that appeals to the reason and the emotion trigger the need for belief and acceptance of the lesson taught through the power of the Holy Spirit. Where these factors come together persuasion becomes a natural expression. When a fruit is fully ripe, it naturally falls off without any special or conscious effort. On the day of Pentecost, the persuaded listeners were left with no alternative but to ask, “What can we do to be saved?” The Ethiopian Eunuch after been hearing from Philip, one with a strong mission passion and purpose could not but asked, “What will prevent me from been baptized?”

Persuasion evangelism in its drive to have the target person/s to personally believe and apply the message attracts criticisms. Those who contend with persuading the audience to accept the gospel message on the preceding terms hold that the result of the message preached is the Lord’s therefore any attempt to persuade people to believe is repudiated. Charles Finney’s critics accused him of placing too much emphasis on the will of man in regeneration and the employment of techniques that became known as the “New Measures” geared towards evoking high emotional response. Dr Coleman responding to this criticism, holds that Finney was not minimizing divine sovereignty in saving man but “simply asserting our human responsibility to response fully to God’s Word.”³³

As maintained by Kane, where the scripture is overstepped the bounds of propriety and undue pressure on the hearers in the pursuit to get hearers induced violates ethical principles and therefore brings disrepute.³⁴ Nonetheless, when persuasion evangelism is found within scriptural precedence awakens and brings about quick response. The word “Persuasion” is not a term that

33. Charles G. Finney, *The Fruit of Revival* (Wheaton: The Institute of Evangelism, 1999), 10.

34. Herbert Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission: A Panoramic View of the Missions from Pentecost to the Present*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), 567.

could not be found in scriptures, especially the New Testament. Paul could say, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). Paul preaching in the synagogues went with reasoning geared towards the audience making commitments (Acts 18:4; 19:8). Paul made it his business to plead with men to have them reconciled to God yet without force (2 Corinthians 2:20). When he preached, he expected result; when that was not found in one place, he turned to another (Acts 13:46).

Spending Meaningful Time with The Child Seemed Lacking

The second statement went to investigate how impactful the school had been in the area of the teacher affording the kids with the luxury of having quality time with them, listening to their stories. It was revealed that more than half of the respondents did not have the luxury that allowed them to have the teacher personally be with them and listen to their stories. It was indicative that there was the lack of quality time spent with pupils. It is important that the teacher spend time with a pupil.

There is a vital need that parents, teachers and all children workers to understand the thoughts of a child and the path that thought could lead the child. This understanding encourages and creates room for more questions and answers in the pupil-teacher relationship which is only made possible by the teacher spending relaxing time with his/her pupils. This quality time with the child makes the teacher to know that every child is unique and different from all other children. Beside it affords the understanding on how to build and strengthen the teacher-pupil relationship. The teacher becomes aware of the pupil's interest and his/her passion giving a clue to the teacher as to how to appropriately plan teaching activities for his pupils. This personal association forms personal bonding between the pupils and their teacher developed through the

personal and special childhood memories gotten from the intimate associations with the kids. This quality moment of association with the child creates room for a free and open communication that helps the pupil express in a relaxed manner their feelings and thoughts. It helps to remove fear. This personal and quality time the teacher gets with his/her pupils releases the kid to make decisions. The time of close relation with the child makes him or her feel loved and cared for.

Introduction Of Kids to Other Christian Fellowship Was Low

Another of investigation sought to understand the impact of the Christian school geared towards knowing whether pupils were encouraged to join other Christian fellowship. This investigation also showed a low verbal interpretation of disagreement, with a mean of 2.5. Introducing a young convert to a good Bible based fellowship help to afford the young convertor a searching person a tremendous benefit that could foster or facilitate where his/her spiritual development of the child. Toddlers for instance are observed to learn to talk and walk early when they are made to mingle or taken to nursery school early than those who are left confined to just their parents. Similarly, the new convert exposed to caring fellowship helps to serve as a catalyst to help the new convert learn to pray, feed on the Word of God, witnessing, build stronger Christian relation. No one delivers her baby and turns her back on her. She would want to see that baby cared for and grows up, going through the several stages in the human development unto adulthood when he becomes one that could be able to care for himself and also responsible enough to care for his/her own children until they also get to adulthood. The spiritual development takes similar route. Helping a convert locate where he/she could live in a group, to have godly Christian from who the teachings of the Bible are learnt and demonstrated. There

he/she learns to pray, witness to others and other virtues of the Christian faith. In this fellowship, the convert goes through the stages of spiritual development unto maturity. No one develops or grows in isolation!

Good and Consistent Christian Model Was Lacking

The last statement on the Likert scale, the fourth statement went to understand how impactful the school was. It sought to know how well the teacher served as a model for his/her kids to follow. To crown it all, answers received on this revealed a want of positive model to follow. There was vivid indication of the lack of one who could give a visual direction that could usher them into a self-reproductive life of the faith they hold in Jesus. Only 12 (17.14%) strongly disagreed with the statement, *the class teacher was not a good Christian model* together with 19 (27.14%) who just disagreed to the statement. On the whole there was a high verbal interpretation of agreement with a mean of 3.51 on the statement, “Our teachers are not good Christian models.”

The means of achieving the purpose of Christian education is the imitation of God. The imitation of God by the pupil depends upon and conforms to the imitation of God by the teacher. The teacher in the Christian school stands in much the same relation to his pupils that Paul stood in with regard to his Corinthian converts when he wrote. “Be ye followers of me” (1 Corinthians 4:16). The Spirit-filled Christian teacher stands in the place of God, representing God to the student. What the student knows of God is often what he sees in his teacher. “Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord.” Paul reminded the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1:6). It is for this reason that the Christian school must pay careful attention to the character and conduct of its teachers. No school that is careless concerning the Christlikeness of its teachers can hope to

fulfill the purpose of Christian education. Children learn best by imitation. Paul Harrison well states,

If the parents are fickle, bossy, nagging, hypocritical; if they worry and get despondent about the future, if they show no courage or strength when trouble comes, if they are forever seeking their own pleasure, if love and truth are not the atmosphere at the home, no amount of religious instruction will blot out the impression these things have made in the children's lives. Happily, the opposite is also; real religion, real trust in God and love for Him cannot be hidden.³⁵

The task of making disciples could not be complete without a modeling relation relationship. True discipleship is achieved by Personal contact. Dr. Coleman holds, those who do respond to Lord's invitation seem to come through individual contact.³⁶ The masses were inspired by the Lord's public ministrations which somehow did help to prepare hearts to receive Him. It is observed that real impact of the gospel ministration of the Lord Jesus came person to person. His strategy to reach the world with the gospel was to progressively unfold his ministry, culminating in the Great commission of the church. He focused on building relationships, preparing a nucleus of laborers for the harvest, who in turn would train others.³⁷ He sees the multitude in terms of individuals. Mass meetings were not the major strength of His evangelistic pursuit.³⁸ Although the masses were no doubt inspired by His public ministry, only those who came through personal individual invitation or contact became recognizable ministers of the gospel. The real impact of his message came person to person. His personal relation seems to seek for those who could in turn win others for the Kingdom.

35. Paul Harrison, *What Makes 'Em Tick? Mini-Manuals for Learner Teachers: How Children Learn*. (Surrey: Denholm House Press 1967), 27.

36. Coleman, *The Master's Way of Personal Evangelism*, 9,10.

37. Coleman, *The Master's Way of Personal Evangelism*, 9,10

38. Coleman, *The Master's Way of Personal Evangelism*, 14.

The Great Commission calls for disciples who could in turn reproduce and disciple others. Being a witness to the good news with the goal of making disciples is simply the expression of the early Christian disciples. Tim Beougher and Robert Coleman share the view that the effective witness must possess a lifestyle of the great commission—a lifestyle that is not only consumed with the passion of reaching the lost for Christ but seeing converts grow up to the extent of been in turn able to make disciples for Christ.³⁹ They become the instruments used by the Holy Spirit in making disciples. Lyle Dorsett and Robert L. Logan do not see the need to evangelize if not in position to nurture and bring into fellowship, one that can help converts mature enough to bear fruit.⁴⁰

To nurture converts as did Jesus, the witness needs to see it as an intentional act. Leroy Eims in his book *The Lost Art of Discipleship Making*, he holds that for three years Jesus nearly spent every hour with His disciples; listening to His disciples, He ate, slept and walked on the rugged and dusty road together. In order to better train and qualifies the disciples Coleman and Eims see Jesus concentrating His association with few as opposed to the masses.⁴¹ Besides, they do not see Christian discipleship attained by mere “teaching” but by the combination of teaching, modeling and the practice of what is taught. This Great commission Lifestyle is exemplified in Paul’s relation with Timothy wherein he commissioned Timothy to pass on what he has heard from Paul in the presence of many witnesses, and to entrust it to faithful men who could be able to likewise teach the same to faithful men (2 Timothy 2:2).

39. Beougher, “The Personal Life of The Effective Witness,” 53, 54; *Overcoming Walls*, 42; Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship*.

40. Lyle Dorsett and Ajith Fernando, eds., *Fulfilling the Great Commission in the Twenty-First Century* (Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2001); Robert L. Logan, *Beyond Church Growth*, 107.

41. Coleman, *the Master Plan of Evangelism*, 26; Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 87-188.

Robert L. Logan and Rick Warren hold that the goal of the great commission is only reached when a new believer or un-churched person is effectively assimilated into the main stream of your church, using his gifts and talents to minister to others; in accordance to the church's goal, ministry outreach crucial to maturity.⁴² The reproductive life style of the early Christians and the intentionality associated with focusing on few, instead of seeking to impress the crowd so that His instructions were more effective, and His students were better trained serve as the greatest way of fulfilling the Great commission.

Based on the research findings, personal observations and experience, in order to have the Christian School a place of impact on the lives of the kids that are enrolled in the school should call for working staff of common Christian and evangelical persuasion, able to rightly feed the cognitive domain of their learners, able to passionately influence the emotion and the will of the pupils towards a Christian behavioral change through meaningful and quality time spent with pupils through the Christian school.

Some Practical Ways the Christian Teacher Can Evangelize Preteens

In order to make gospel teaching appeal to the whole personality of the preteens in a way that could bring about positive response to the message, the following are vital in the fulfillment of those needs.

The best teachers help to maximize the learning potential of each of the pupils in his/her class. They see themselves as the key to unlocking their pupil's potential by developing positive, respectful relationships with their pupils, beginning on the first day of the school year. It is essential to earn one's student's trust early in the year. The teacher must treat them with respect.

42. Robert L. Logan, *Beyond Church Growth*, 107; Rick Warren, *The Purpose Drive Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 44.

Pupils sum up respect for the teacher who treats them with respect. One that does not yell, use sarcasm, single out a student or try to embarrass them. Problem should be handled professionally, and without partiality.

The teacher must express genuine interest in his/her pupils. Serving preteens is not just a matter of just going in or showing up and teach; one must first show that he cares about what pupils are facing. One must first get to the level of preteens, earn their trust and show interest in their lives or else, kids are going to tune you out. One should think outside the classroom. It is needful to go to their basketball games/volleyball. Let them be able to freely approach the teacher and hold him/her in confidence—free to talk unreservedly to their teacher about their personal needs. Show interest in their lives outside school. Talk to the pupils about their lives’ interest and extra-curricular activities that they participate in. Take interest in their interest even if you do not share the same passion. Attend a few soccer games or extra-curricular activities with them to show support. Encourage your pupils to take their passions and interests and turn them into a career if possible. Think about the extra-curricular activities of your pupils and try not to over burden them. Use the pupil’s interest at your advantage. Each pupil has passion for something. The teacher should utilize these interest and passion to their advantage by incorporating them into the lessons.

The teacher must provide structure. Pupils respond positively in class where there is structure.⁴³ Providing structure makes the pupils feel safe and helps them increase their learning. The teacher who lacks structure not only loses valuable instructional time, but in most cases never gains the respect of their pupils. It is critical that the teacher sets them true early by establishing clear expectations and practicing class procedure. Likewise, the pupils need to see

43. Derrick Meador, “Strategies for teachers to develop positive relationship with students,” ThoughtCo., July 05, 2019, accessed November 19, 2022, <https://www.thoughtco.com/strategies-for-teachers-to-maximize-student-learning-time-4065667>.

that those are followed through. Incorporate story telling into the lesson they study. Everyone loves to hear a compelling story. It helps pupils to make real life-connection to the concepts they are learning.

Teach with enthusiasm and passion. Pupils respond positively when the teacher is enthusiastic and passionate about the content of what he is teaching. Excitement is contagious! Incorporate humor into the lesson. Teaching and learning should not be a boring exercise. The teacher should incorporate humor into his teaching exercise. It may involve sharing joke, to create fun and laughter. Sharing makes pupils to enjoy coming to a class because love and laughter awaits them as they learn.

Pupils should be provided with plenty of fun moments with spiritual significance. It is true that most pupils can fail to remember the details of a 10-20-minute message or the exact content of a small group discussion but can constantly recall funny skits they have performed and can also remember songs from months back and also can remember life changing experiences from camps. Kids remember what is funny. The teacher of the preteen must seek to build strong support incorporating the knowledge about preteens' spiritual needs into the teacher's ministry.

The teacher should make lessons applicable to his/her pupils. The teacher must seek to meet the needs of the preteen by keeping programs on the cutting edge and constantly be revised to meet the needs of the kids. Effective teaching must have lessons applicable to the preteen. The Preteen minister therefore needs to be more creative with lessons in order to relate or apply to the lives of the kids.

It is also advised that the teacher assign responsibilities to his/her pupils gradually. The teacher/leader should be able to find the gifts of kids and turn them loose in those areas under the

leader's watchful eyes. It is recommended that preteens are given responsibilities a little bit at a time. This can prove their faithfulness regardless their age. Preteens' spiritual needs are best met by allocating real responsibilities to them and follow on how they are doing.

The teacher must furthermore recognize the fact that a preteen child needs a strong adult Mentor. Kids need a ministry staff and volunteers that are there consistently. Kids' lives are transformed by a dedicated ministry worker that is there every week before the pupils arrive. Upon the arrival of kids, he/she must be there to welcome and interact with each as found possible. Ask them how they spent the week or day. They need one who spends time listening to them and joking around with them. Such mentors are regarded as heroes, ones who make a difference in the lives of kids and lead them to spiritual maturity. And must be ones characterized by positive attitudes. It is essential that the teacher's personal issues do not interfere with his ability to teach.

The preteen needs a leader that can facilitate spiritual growth. The kids need to know and understand that the leader is not exempt from challenges and do share with them how he deals with the challenges. The teacher must be honest and real. The kids do see right through the teacher. They know their teacher more than he thinks. They need to see or know the struggles of their leader to understand that they are not alone. Teachers must be honest with them about their own life.

Besides the above practical ways of building good and impactful relationship with the preteens, the teacher should go the extra mile. He must seek to expose the pupils to having positive experience through the gospel ministration. In this regard the teacher must endeavor to know the needs of the pupils and give assistance in addressing those needs. Provide extra tutoring for pupils to make them succeed. Have a link with the parents of the pupils and

communicate with them frequently and take a genuine interest in the well-being of the student. Going the extra mile could mean giving them gifts of food, clothing. It could even include continuing to work with your pupils even when he has gone beyond your class.

John M. Dettoni, in his concluding summary *On Being a Developmental Teacher* has well stated,

In sum, an effective developmental teacher teaches for the growth and development of the learners, not merely for data acquisition, nor for indoctrination of dogma in a mindless fashion to satisfy some authorities' dictates, nor for the manipulation of learners to authorities' purposes. Rather, effective developmental teaching that is biblical and Christ-like helps learners to be formed in Christ and to grow up into Him in every way (Gal. 4:19; Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28). Teaching is not for transmission of information alone, but for transformation of the person. We teach for growth, maturity, and development of learners, not so much that they can merely pass a test nor to satisfy some administrative body that oversees the school. We teach that people will become mature and complete, being transformed more and more into Christ's likeness (Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28-29; 2 Cor. 3:18).⁴⁴

The Christian teacher "is a teacher that treats the pupils as those made in the image of God, carrying the divine imprint on them, and therefore deserving of respect, encouragement, and help to develop into all that God is calling them to be" through the help of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵

Recommended Strategies to Reach the Preteens Through the Christian School

The Christian school's initiation must be borne out of the need to fulfill the Great Commission. The school must be founded on the divine mandate to evangelize and to disciple children to which every staff should fully subscribe. The administrator and staff must be in place to deliver Christian goals and objectives. In this regard the personnel must have experienced the incarnation love and are ready to give the same. Besides, the personnel must be ones who have clear-cut Christian testimony and some ministry education. Furthermore, they must have a

44. Dettoni, "On Being a Developmental Teacher,"262-263.

45. Dettoni, "On Being a Developmental Teacher,"262-263.

calling from God to ministry work and are ready to submit and subscribe to the school's purpose of being.

The Christian school must have an effective teaching and discipleship program that meet or fulfill the cognitive needs. This becomes a reality by having the teaching of the Bible organized or structured in way that could lead to knowing of God in a personal way. Secondly to meet the cognitive needs the teaching must be based on age groups/levels. Thirdly the teacher must be able to teach basic Christian doctrines. Fourthly he/she must be able to teach the gospel (what to teach the preteens). And fifthly, be able to have varied methods of presentation.

The Christian school should have effective program that meets the emotional needs. The teacher should make pupils feel loved by personally loving and befriending them, developing a relationship with them on personal and on cooperate level. However, caution should be observed in dealing with the opposite sex. The teacher must seek to know the pupils' home environment, pray definitely for the target pupils' salvation. He/she should seek to develop an atmosphere that warrants response, should be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and to give definite opportunity to make decision for Christ. The teacher in a Christian school should be in place to make pupils feel dignified or build the pupils self-worth. Besides, the teacher should be able to present the gospel through stories. Furthermore he/she should be able to make lessons applicable and able to meet the needs of the pupils.

The Christian school should have effective program that meet social needs of kids. The school must have programs that could attract friends of pupils. It should include mealtime fellowship and celebrations. Let there be vacation Bible School sessions, Children's revival, Boys and girls camp, Home-Bible club and Open-air Evangelistic meeting

The Christian school should have special considerations of getting the Muslim pupils saved and disciplined. In this regard, each teacher must endeavor to:

- Begin and end with prayer. Be committed to praying regularly for your Muslim kids and for Muslim children in general.
- Seek to build true friendship with the Muslim pupils. Seek to be involved in the lives of your Muslim kids; and at the same time the teacher should give them the opportunity to be involved in his own life.
- Seek to know the Muslim kids intimately. This could be done by asking him/her questions. Ask about their family and their likes and keenly listen to the answers they give. Enquire about the challenges they are facing and see how the teacher could offer practical help.
- Teach the Muslim kids the bible to have knowledge of the Word of God
- Personally love and befriend the Muslim kid by developing a caring relationship. If pork had been part of the diet of the school meal if not avoided for the sake of the Muslim pupils, then an alternate menu which the Muslim kids could select. Love the parents or guardians as well. It is said, “The gift of the gospel must come wrapped in you.”⁴⁶ The teacher, however, must observe some caution, preferably intimate friendship should be limited to same sex.
- Channels of communicating the gospel must be away from the home, preferably be carried on at a neutral environment. For the Muslim child, the Christian school becomes a major source of information about faith in Jesus. The next major means is the use of correspondent course and Christian literatures. Besides the use of extended media and

46. Del Kingsriter, *Reach Out in Friendship* (Minneapolis, MN: Center for Ministry to Muslims, 1980), 15.

basic media are also powerful channels of releasing and interacting with the Word of God.

- The message must be made relevant; including the problem areas, where the Muslim pupil has been taught wrong about Christian faith.
- Resource the Muslim child with evangelistic materials and personal correspondences. Preferably assisting him/her as to where to find and access them on the internet or at public libraries in order to avoid early religious persecution that could endanger the faith of the young convert.
- Be ready to answer the questions from the pupils. Give a reason for the hope that is within you. First Peter 3:15 is a powerful scripture verse for anyone who desires to be an effective witness.
- Emphasis the uniqueness of the gospel
- Present the gospel through stories and personal testimonies
- The manifestation of supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit in the life of the teacher or Christian worker is an added asset.
- Lead the Muslim pupil to confess Christ as the Spirit directs
- Receive believers into caring fellowship – one that genuinely love God and people and do delightfully seek souls to be saved and nurtured in their new found faith.
- Make clear as to what being a Christian means and how following Christ could attract suffering and persecution.
- Introduce converts to trusted friends – brethren who would truly care for the spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing and safety.

- The Christian fellowship must make room for rejected or disowned Muslim kids and give them maximum protection against hostile Muslims.
- Avoid controversy whenever possible. (One's prayer including intercessory prayers, giving of self, the Christ like love opens the heart for the gospel more than anything.

The Christian school teacher should seek to meet the spiritual needs through the Holy Spirit guidance and empowerment, and prayer.

The teacher must rely on the leading of the Holy Spirit and also be dependent on prayer. It is observed that the early church discipleship making campaign was a Spirit directed and empowered Ministry. In the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit is revealed as the great strategist throughout the book; He initiates, guides and direct. For example, Philip after having been significantly used by the Spirit in bringing the Samaritans to Christ was guided by the spirit to reach the Ethiopian eunuch with the gospel (Acts 8:29). Also, under the direction of the Holy Spirit he was led to begin the gentile mission (Acts 10:19-20). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit after fasting and prayer, they were directed by the Spirit to "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2).

The Holy Spirit not only guided and directed the mission of the early Christians, but He also empowered the believers to accomplish their Christ-ordained mission (Acts 1:8; 4:33).⁴⁷ The Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Godhead plays such an important role in fulfilling the Great Commission. Robert Coleman says it right; "The Holy Spirit puts it all together."⁴⁸ In addition, he notes,

He it is who gives vision of the Kingdom and enables us to project plans to reach our world with the Gospel. The Spirit draws out disciples, planting in their hearts the desire to learn; our part is to respond to His initiatives. He forms the body of believers, giving

47. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship*, 132.

48. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship*, 132.

unity and love to the fellowship. The indwelling counselor calls the church to ministry and dispenses gifts for every service. Through His strength faith comes alive in obedience, and by His impartation of grace, we are conformed to the character of our Lord.”⁴⁹

It is agreed by Bill Bright, Billy Graham, Robert Coleman, and Timothy Beougher that the witness is to simply to take the initiative of sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit for the successful fulfillment of the commission and leaving the result to God. It is realized that everything the disciple needs for the fulfillment of the great commission is found in the Holy Spirit.

Effective personal witnessing was rooted in prayer. Prayer should be foremost in the life of the effective witness for Christ. E.M. Bounds and Richard Foster hold that prayer is the way to revival.⁵⁰ On the importance of prayer, it is learnt that every great witness of the past had been faithful in prayer and that the way revival originates is the same way by which it is sustained. Lives of revival leaders throughout history have been characterized by prayer. John Wesley had a prayer altar in his London home. The New Testament believers devoted themselves to prayer: It was the foremost work of Christian leader is to pray. It prevents falling into the temptation of doing ministry strictly based on human strength. Deliverance and change of lives are only made possible through prayer.⁵¹ E. M. Bounds, Malcolm McDow, and Alvin Reid all agree on the fact that what the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations, or more and novel methods, but men who are mighty in prayer.⁵² The Christian school should seek to evangelize the child through the use of gospel manual.

49. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship*, 132.

50. E. M. Bounds, *Preacher and Prayer* (Los Angeles: Media, 2012), 21; Richard Foster, *Prayers from the Heart* (London: Hodder& Stoughton, 1994), 165.

51. Foster, *Prayers from the Heart*, 174, 175.

52. Bounds, *Preacher and Prayer*, 6.

The Importance and The Ingredients of an Effective Gospel Devotional Manual

Gospel devotional manual is needful in order to offer quality teaching that employs effective teaching techniques and methods. It is also needed to have logical and orderly presentation of the gospel. Besides, it is needful in order to have a consistent outgoing of message. Furthermore, it is useful in order to have a written message documented that can be on daily basis referred to and for the future reference and study.

A well-prepared and effective devotional manual for preteens, including the Muslim child should have the following:

- It should target the needs of the pupils, their age group, and their background.
- It should also entail salvation message.
- It should have lessons logically and orderly presented.
- It should entail or consider the different stages in spiritual growth.
- It should be geared towards helping the pupil make a decision for Christ in order to be saved.
- The lesson should reassure the pupils' salvation.
- The lesson should be disciple making
- The gospel devotional manual should target or focus on salvation, maturity, Christian service and mission in order to fulfill the Great Commission mandate.

Besides, the importance and the vital components a devotional manual should have is the way the kids are taught the bible. The kids are to be encouraged in their faith and help them to learn how to read the bible on their own each day. They should be taught to set special time to read the bible once they know how to read. The teacher should himself/herself know the verse well; memorize it before teaching the kids. The teacher must explain the verse in terms the kids

can understand. What book of the Bible should a child read first? I recommend that all kids begin with the gospel of Mark, more especially the Muslim kids. The reason being Mark's gospel is short and to the point. Luke, the longest of the gospels is also a good one to start with as it combines actions and teaching in his discourse. And it also smoothly connects with the book of Acts of the Apostle.

The Design of Gospel Devotional

An effective biblical instruction incorporates both teaching and training in order to fulfill the different aspects of the educational mandate of the scripture. This, according to David L. Edwards, calls for a well-prepared educational instruction that entails an instruction purpose, identified needs, institutional objectives, curriculum design and an instructional strategy in order to have an effective educational design.⁵³

Design implies purpose and instructional design demands clear articulation of the mission for which it is intended.”⁵⁴ The instructional purpose establishes the foundation on which the entire instruction base upon which the teaching stands. Identifying needs - Education goals not anchored to an accurate comprehension of existing needs within the population becomes sterile and ineffective.”⁵⁵ This becomes what forms the link to making real rationale for the institutions purpose for the education. The identification of the need brings about the concerns to securing possible solution, providing effective biblical teaching to satisfy the deficiency or what is lacking.

53. Edwards, “Designing Biblical Instruction,”45.

54. Edwards, “Designing Biblical Instruction,”48.

55. Edwards, “Designing Biblical Instruction,” 48.

Identify Needs – Devise Solution – Implement and Then Evaluate

Establish Goals: planning effective learning experiences for pupils should have specified aims. The board and administrative leaders formulate learning goals through statements of mission or philosophy at a macro level as they take cognizance of needs that exist within a given community. At the classroom level the teacher, through his day-to-day interaction with pupils translate institutional goals in to micro instructional objectives. Frequent communication between the administration and the staff helps to deepen understand the goals and to maintain constituency in the delivery learning goals. Goals do not indicate details about the teaching process, materials and not even the proficiency. “Goals are painted with broad strokes, realizing that fine detail will be added through more specific statements of objectives.”⁵⁶ Goals are broader, less specific as they are designed to establish direction and the purpose of the teaching.

The Instructional Objectives

The educational aims are generally established at administrative level without the direct input of the teacher. However, it is the teacher’s responsibility to formulate detailed objectives. He should spend time and effort in making or preparing a well – stated aim that guides his/her teaching. This is necessary even if the institution has a readymade curriculum with course and lesson objectives to meet the specific needs of the pupils.

David L. Edwards quoting Edge advises the following concerning the formulation of objectives:

1. Make the objectives brief enough to quickly remember.
2. Make it clear enough to write down.

56. Edwards, “Designing Biblical Instruction,” 49.

3. Make it specific enough to be achievable.⁵⁷

Edwards cite a recommended model for writing objectives that suggests three vital components in order to have a complete objective. The first, states that there must be consideration of audience, which brings into account the age, the developmental level, scholastic experience and any other relevant details that could help achieve the teacher's aim. The second consideration is the behavior. This leads to questions regarding the teaching outcome of the lesson – what the pupils will be able to do when they master the lesson. The third is the condition. This could refer to two elements – the provision of anything that could be accessible to achieve the lesson's purpose and the second focuses on the parameters of performance.⁵⁸

Curriculum Designs – Consult not on Christian school

Curriculum is a prescribed academic program or set of documents that outline content in a specific area or it could be specific printed materials actually used in the classroom. The assessment of the need of the institution – the specific need of the students and choosing materials that could enhance the learning opportunities challenges the professional skill of each teacher. The second aspect of vital consideration about curriculum is “development.” Decision regarding the use of adopted instructional program should demand having the same kind of local involvement. Curriculum traditional is localized and the materials chosen should be fitted into a scheme that fulfils the goals and objectives of this school. One important caution in adopting a full curriculum from a different source is that of taking the greatest care is to remain sensitive that the adopted program does succumb to the program designed to satisfy a different set of needs.

57. Edwards, “Designing Biblical Instruction,” 45.

58. Edwards, “Designing biblical Instruction,” 45.

The next vital important consideration in curriculum design is to find out if the curriculum is consistent with the mission and philosophy of the institution. It is noted that there should be a “a strong evident correlation between the purposes emanating from a statement of philosophy and those reflected in the curriculum documents.”⁵⁹ Christian education curriculum must have a thorough integration of biblical principles supplied into all other subjects that are taught. Next to the curriculum’s consistency with the mission and philosophy of the institution comes the pedagogical concern – valid concepts of instruction theory incorporated into the curriculum plan such as those regarding the development of capacities of pupils.

The Instructional Strategy

This portrays the leader embarking on utilizing charts, maps and facts as part of the drive of the teacher’s campaign for understanding. This is reflected in the organized curriculum and that of the learning well written lesson plan.⁶⁰ Every teacher in a formal setting is expected to have a prepared lesson plan to follow. The Lesson plan to follow should be an organized curriculum and with specific learning activity. Such lesson plan must have a specified lesson aims, the materials, methods to be used and also a follow-up on the learning activities.

Apart from some teacher considering lesson planning a tedious exercise, some mistake the lesson plan to be the end for the means to accomplish the goal of the instruction without giving attention to implementation process with a good lesson plan, with a clearly defined elements of the learning helps the teacher in making the lesson come alive for the pupils. The list of the specific objectives that relates to the lesson topic becomes the first element to consider in teaching the Bible for the purpose of changing the lives of one’s audience – pupils. This should

59. Edwards, “Designing Biblical Instruction,” 54.

60. Edwards, “Designing Biblical Instruction,” 54.

make the teacher think carefully about each pupil needs in the class – what they need to know and understand about their given topic. What attitude and skills need to be developed in living out what they learn. As noted by Edward, “Visualizing and then verbalizing the needs of specific class members improves the practicality of instruction.”⁶¹

Another key factor in addition to the good, prepared lesson plan that recognizes student’s activity as the essential ingredient is the teacher’s behavior with regards to the planned lesson. Edward quotes four components of learning that is correlated with the teacher’s behavior in motivation, perception, response and reinforcement. Student’s motivation as well noted mirrors the teacher’s attitudes and enthusiasm and appreciation for the subject. It is stated,

Perception occurs best when the teachers provide clear ones to focus attention on significant idea and match methods to content. Providing students with opportunity for interactive response over the material, with both teacher and with peers improve retention, as does the teacher’s skill in reinforcing and affirming so that achievement becomes pleasurable.⁶²

Another factor that detracts or eats into the time spent on learning is spending undue time or giving undue attention to less important issues that do not foster or enhance the learning process. Furthermore, one should be aware of the fact that monotony kills or discourages involvement and encourages pupils become passive and bored variation of activities becomes an antidote to students getting bored. Challenging pupils towards higher levels of understanding or development do also serve as a motivator for active learning. One means this can be accomplished is by the use of questions. The questions help pupils to think beyond what they already know.

Strategic lesson plan does not only focus on effective beginning and middle sections in lesson development but must also focus on a good closure, not only with a summation of the

61. Edwards, “Designing biblical Instruction,” 55.

62. Edwards, “Designing biblical Instruction,” 55.

lesson just completed and anticipates the lesson to follow but must also provide some cues about the pupils learning. Students should be made to respond to few prepared questions be able to summarize key points.

Example Of Children's Lesson and What It Should Contain

A children lesson is designed to help the children Christian worker to share truths from God's Word with children in ways that are meaningful and of lasting impact on their lives.

What a bible lesson for preteens should have:

1. **Lesson title** – It is the overall lesson topic.
2. **Lesson Aim** -In order to understand what the kids will be studying the teacher reads through the lesson goals.
3. **Key words** – the teacher reads through the definitions and look for these words within the lessons so, you are prepared to explain the meaning to the pupils
4. **Scripture Text** – this presents the full scripture text of study for that lesson in the New International Version.
5. **Welcome and introduction.** The teacher takes this time to welcome each pupil as they arrive while giving them an introduction to the lesson and engaging in a worship song
6. **Bible Memorable verse**
7. **The Word** -Share the story with the student depending on the age category.
8. **The Way** (Bible discussions & Questions) – Engage the pupils with discussion questions about the text

9. **Prayer** – Every teaching session ends in prayer. The pupils must be led to prayer that relates to the lesson application to them individually and encourage them to share any personal prayer as well. You may as well be urged to have children be led to accept Christ into their hearts, those who had not done so before by asking them, “would you like to invite Jesus into your life?”

Dear Heavenly Father – Thank you for loving me always because Jesus died on the cross to take away my sins. I believe he rose again to give me new life. Detailed example of a children’s manual devotional lesson is found at the appendix.

Conclusion

It is a grave concern that the Christian school has lost its potency in affecting young lives in the country as it had done during the days of the early missionaries. Urged by this concern, the author sort to see how the Christian school could again exert an impactful influence on a nation that is predominantly Islamic, through the children who would go through the Christian institution of learning.

To understand, why pupils go through their basic education in Christian schools with little or no recognizable Christian impact; taking special notes of problems and obstacles hindering the salvation of children that attend the school. This led to making a general overview of education, with special attention on Christian education; its inception, rise and its present decline. Besides, a search was made about the biblical, theological and historical foundation of the Christian education with respect of spiritual formation in the Christian school. Additionally, there was a probing into the subject of fulfilling the great Commission bordering evangelism, discipleship and revival. And there was another probing that dealt with outreach directed towards

ministry to the Preteen Muslims, with the aim of identifying positive workable concepts and attitudes towards kids at Zion Ministries Elementary School.

Statistics show the existence of a remarkable evangelistic opportunity, in the face of a very weak evangelistic instrument to appropriately and effectively deliver the gospel that could effect change. Major causes of weakness that make pupils not to be positively challenged to make decision for Christ and be discipled are the lack of Christian staff that individually and collectively share the Christian schools' evangelistic purpose of existence. Another deficiency is the lack of effective gospel presence and teaching that could warrant the transformation of souls. The third, which is observed to be the major or basis of the problem leading to the Great Commission impact of the Christian school is the passive existence or non-existence of a defined purpose of existence in the Christian schools.

Major reasons why the preteens pupils (including preteen Muslims) need to be evangelized

1. Christ's command is to make disciples of all nations
2. God's love bring reconciliation to all who receive Christ
3. Islam's failure to meet key moral and spiritual needs
4. Because of the beneficial influence of the gospel to the child.⁶³

Seven basic concepts need to be fostered in the Christian School.

1. Children must be taught the Word, it should not be an option
2. Christian school staff, more especially the teaching staff, must not only be a Christian but one that has ministry inclination or a call to serve as a teacher and is a role model
3. Evangelism and discipleship of the child should not be an option
4. The Christian school's purpose of being should be made alive and holistic

63. William McElwee Miller, *A Christian response to Islam* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1976), 172.

5. The gospel must be appropriately taught and effectively shared
6. The laity should be encouraged and considered invaluable partners if an end-time revival must be realized.
7. Evangelism through the Christian school must be intentional with an ongoing emphasis on the importance of reaching the child for Christ, and that meaning Christians, local churches and denominations should set aside budget to assist with staff remunerations for Christian school; this could foster the provision of appropriate staff for Christian school ministry.

Considering the fact, that a man does not give what he does not have, it becomes impossible for the non-Christian teacher to fulfill the purpose of the Christian school. It requires Christian staff in order to fulfill the Christian purpose of that school. One possible way of staffing the Christian school is having the local church become intentional in educating its young people with strong mission values that could help them see the need of using their desired professions to fulfilling God's mission. Each year reasonable number of Christian students graduate from college in various disciplines including teaching. If these young people are well prepared with mission values and are further given reasonable remunerations for their service in the Christian school or where possible are comparatively given better wage than their counterparts teaching in secular school could in a short period of time help to staff the school with the appropriate staff. As the church establishes a sound mission education it could go to help pupils develop the desire or receive the call to teach rather than a mere choice of profession. Such teachers stand to put the importance and fulfillment derived by being developmental teacher over material benefit.

The church must be made to see the importance of the child's Christian education and to make it a priority. Christian parents need to be educated about the importance of having their kids nurtured in a Christian environment as part of their sacred responsibility of bringing up their kids in a wholesome environment. They should be made to understand the wisdom of preserving their kids from being endangered by putting them where the scripture does not reign. As the local church emphasizes the advantages and benefits of the early evangelistic outreach to the child and the long-term nurture offered by the Christian school, should warrant the greatest part of the church's evangelistic budget to be geared towards this vital ministry to the young. Such could not only contribute to the recruitment of Christian teachers but also to the training of appropriate leadership and staff for the Christian school. Agreeing with Fredrick Douglas, "It's better to build a strong child than to repair an adult."

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRETEEN PUPILS

Five-Point Likert Scale Questions

Please rate your agreement with each of the following statements by checking the appropriate column of choice: SD =strongly disagree; D = disagree; NDA = neither disagree nor agree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

	Cognitive	SD	D	DA	A	AS
1	<i>The Bible is truly God's Word.</i>					
2	<i>Christians do worship three gods.</i>					
3	<i>Satan makes children disobey their parents.</i>					
4	<i>My good work is what saves me from hell.</i>					

	Affective	SD	D	DA	A	SA
1	<i>The gospel teaching periods are always boring.</i>					
2	<i>My teacher hugs me.</i>					
3	<i>My teacher does not know when I'm tired.</i>					
4	<i>My teacher commends good performances only</i>					

	Behavioral	SD	D	DA	A	SA
1	<i>I am personally challenged to accept Jesus as Saviour.</i>					
2	<i>My teacher has no time to listen to my stories?</i>					
3	<i>I belong to a Christian fellowship</i>					
4	<i>My class teacher is not a good Christian model.</i>					

General Questions

Answer the following questions by placing a check mark in front of the best response.

1 ***What sex are you?***

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other

1 ***What age category do you belong?***

- ☐ 7 to 8 years
- ☐ 9 -10 years
- ☐ 11-12 years
- ☐ 13-14 years
- ☐ 15 years and above

1 ***How long have you been a pupil in this school?***

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1 to 3 years
- ☐ 4 to 6 years
- ☐ 7 to 9 years
- ☐ 10 years and above

1 ***What religious faith do you consider yourself to be?***

- ☐ A Christian
- ☐ A Muslim
- ☐ Christian and Muslim
- ☐ Others
- ☐ I don't know

1 ***Do you have access to the internet?***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, where do you access the internet?

- ☐ School computer
- ☐ On my phone
- ☐ On my personal computer/tablet
- ☐ Home computer

- ¶ ***Which religion do your parents/guardians claim to be?***
- └ Islam
 - └ Christianity
 - └ Islam and Christian
 - └ Other
- ¶ ***Do your parents/guardians observe 40th Day Ceremony?***
- └ No
 - └ Yes
 - └ I don't know
- ¶ ***Do your parents allow the practice of other religious faith in your home?***
- └ Always
 - └ Often
 - └ Sometime
 - └ Never
 - └ I don't know
- ¶ ***Can any of your parents/guardian read and write English?***
- Yes
 - No
- ¶ ***From the below list, what do you think is the most important reason why your parent chose to have you enrolled at your current school?***
- └ It's close to our home.
 - └ The good result it makes at the primary school leaving examination
 - └ The character or behavior of its pupils
 - └ Its caring teachers
 - └ Tuition cost
 - └ It has a nice school campus.
 - └ My father/mother or older relative attended it.
- ¶ ***Does your teacher know your parents/guardians?***
- └ Yes
 - └ No
 - └ I don't know
- ¶ ***Does your school have non- Christian teachers on staff?***
- └ No

- └ Yes
- └ I don't know

⌘ ***Does the school have a counsellor/chaplain?***

- └ Yes
- └ No

If yes, is he/her a full-time staff?

- └ Yes
- └ No, I don't know

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF ZION MINISTRIES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DEVOTIONAL LESSON

The goals of Zion Ministries' Devotional meetings

To encourage pupils in how they get to know Jesus and share him with others.

It is the goal of Zion Ministries' devotional to:

- Know God's Word – learn more about God in the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God.
- Pray – Jesus is the best friend one can ever have. One can talk to Him at any time.
- Join a group – There is the need that all friends believe in Jesus.
- Share - Share everyday what you have learnt with your friends and as possible you're your family so they too will know how much God loves them.

A children lesson designed to help the Christian worker share truths from God's Word with children in ways that are meaningful and of lasting impact on the lives of the kids.

Theme: The Life of Christ

- a. The Life of Christ - Unit 1 (From the birth through the early ministry, including John the Baptist)
 - b. The Life of Christ - Unit 2 (Dealing with the middle ministry of Jesus).
 - c. The Life of Christ – Unit 3 (the late ministry through the resurrection)

What things to be done each day!

1. Talk to God
2. Memorize the memory verse for the day
3. Read the day's devotional
4. Answer questions
5. Talk to God again thanking him

Component of ZION MINISTRIES DEVOTIONAL Bible lesson MANUAL for preteens a week (45 minutes on Wednesday and 10 minutes on the other days)

A sample of Zion Ministries School 45 Minutes Devotional Time

WORSHIP Time (5 Minutes)

- Song/s of worship
- Opening prayer

Kids are often appointed or volunteers to perform leading roles at the devotion
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Welcome and Introduction(5 Minutes)

- **Welcome** -The teacher takes this time to formally welcome pupils, after he/she would have interacted with some who arrived at school in time and had been greeted warmly and inquired about each pupil's well-being as they arrive. Allow them to socialize until the time to start. When the time to start is reached the entire school assembles and is collectively warmly and enthusiastically welcome.
- **Introduction of the current lesson** -Today, we worship the only man who died and rose again from the dead. On the very first Easter, Jesus won the victory over death when God raised Him from the dead. He won life forever with God for every person who would believe in Him. This makes it possible to celebrate the victory over sin and death every day. 1 Corinthians 15:57 reads, "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Sing an Easter related children's song or chorus).

The title emanates from the preview of the lesson series. "Learning by units is far better than learning in piecemeal."¹ Each lesson series has specific purpose which is related to the general purpose – The overall lesson topic.

Lesson Aim

- The pupils to know and understand that Jesus conquered sin and death when He rose from the grave.
- What Jesus conquering sin and death means for them when Christ rose from the grave

In order to understand what the kids will be studying, the teacher makes known the goals of the lesson.

Key words

- **Resurrect** – It is to bring back from the dead to life
- **Tomb** – It is a grave dug in the side of a mountain.
- **Jerusalem**

The teacher reads through the definitions and look for these words within the lessons in order to be prepared to explain the meaning to the pupils.

Bible Memorable verse(5 Minutes)

1. Duane V. Hurst, *And He Gave Teachers* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1955), 151.

“... Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Scripture Text (5 Minutes) The full scripture text of study for that lesson.

John 20:1-18 (New International Version)

The Empty Tomb

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. ⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³ They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” “Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Mary. “She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). ¹⁷ Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

The Word (5 Minutes)

- **Read the passage for the day from the Bible. If possible, get the scripture passage on the projector screen**

- **Share the story with the student depending on the age category.** In our previous lessons we saw what happened when Jesus was betrayed, arrested and killed on the cross. This happened outside the city wall of Jerusalem. (A visual aid, a map and pointing where Jerusalem is located and Calvary and apply varied teaching methods as it does apply). Jesus gave up his last breath; the curtain in the temple was torn into two; beginning from the top to the bottom. After he died, a man named Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus, wrapped the body of Jesus with a nice smelling species. Placed the body of Jesus in a tomb he had bought for himself and placed a large stone at the entrance of the grave where the body of Jesus was placed. Let us see what happened on the third day. Today's reading is from John 20:1-18. Can we highlight our key verse, the memorable verse? Before we start the reading can we pray that God will open our eyes, ears, hearts and minds to his Word as we go through the lesson today? Who would like to stand up and lead us in this prayer? As John 20:1-18 is being read imagine you were Mary, the mother of Jesus and Peter, one of His first disciples

The Bible discussions & Questions (5minutes). Engage the pupils with discussion questions about the text.

- Who came to save mankind?
- Jesus came and died for who?
- After Jesus died where was he buried?
- On the third day of Jesus' burial, who came to the tomb? What did the person see?
- What did Mary do when she saw the stone was rolled away?
- When they looked into the tomb what did they find?
- Who did Mary see with her own eyes?
- When Mary returned to her friends, what message did she tell them?
- Jesus before His arrest had told his disciples that he would rise from the grave after His death. When John entered the tomb and could not find Jesus there and that the linen strips had been folded, the Bible says John "believed." What do you think John believed? (Listen to the pupils' responses)
- Did Peter and John find the body of Jesus inside the tomb?
- What did they find in the tomb? (The folded strips of linen the body of Jesus had been wrapped with.)
- After Peter and John returned home, who did Mary see seated in the tomb? (Two angels) why was Mary crying when she could not find Jesus? (She thought someone had taken the body of Jesus away not knowing that Jesus had risen)

- Later on, Mary saw a man in the garden who she thought was the gardener. Who was this man? (Jesus) Mary had seen Jesus die on the cross; how do you think Mary felt to see Jesus alive again? (Listen to the pupils' responses)
- What did Mary say to the disciples after she had seen the resurrected Jesus face to face? ("I have seen Lord Jesus!") Mary was a witness that God had raised Jesus from the dead; and that He was alive!) If you had been there to see Jesus in person on the day of His resurrection from the dead, what would you have done? (Pupils' responses)

Prayer Time(5 Minutes)

- Every teaching session ends in prayer. The pupils must be led to prayer that relates to the lesson, application to them individually and
- Encourage them to share any personal prayer as well.
- You may as well be urged to have children be led to accept Christ into their hearts, those who had not done so before by asking them, "would you like to invite Jesus into your life?"

Dear Heavenly Father

Thank you for loving me always. I thank you because Jesus died in on the cross to take away my sins. I believe he rose again to give me new life. Help my faith in you to grow stronger and stronger every day. Thank you for rising from the dead so I can live with you forever. Amen!

ANNOUNCEMENT AND BENEDICTION (5 minutes)

- Get to let the kids know of a children Sunday school class where they could know more about Jesus and grow in Him, for desiring kids who do not have such provision.
- School announcement
- One of the pupils who volunteers do the closing prayer.

A sample of Zion Ministries School 5 - 10 Minutes four days a week, Devotional Lesson follows the following outline:

- Prayer
- Title of the lesson for the day (He is risen!)
- The memory verse for the day
- Brief exhortation based on the memory verse for the day
- Question/s & application
- Pray

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